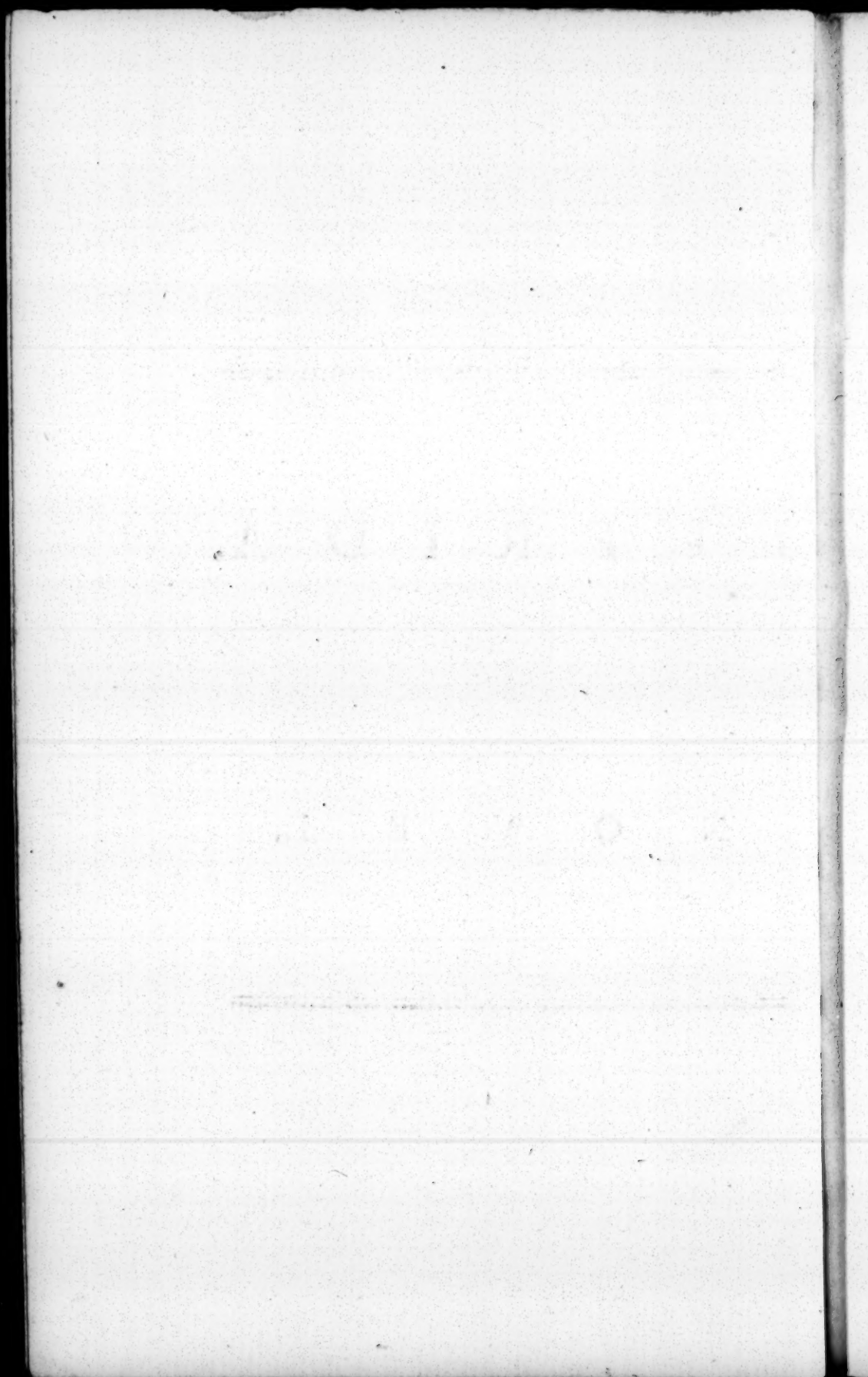


1568/932.

E L F R I D A.

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N O V E L.



E L F R I D A;

OR,

E. Moore.

P A T E R N A L A M B I T I O N.

A

N O V E L.

I N T W O V O L U M E S.

B Y A L A D Y.

V O L. II.

D U B L I N:

P R I N T E D B Y J O H N R E A,

F O R

Messrs. W H I T E, B Y R N E, B R O W N, M O O R E,
L E W I S and H A L P E N.

M,DCC,LXXXVI.



ELFRIDA.

A RENCOUNTER.

WILMOT, after the most favorable voyage, having touched but at one island to take in fresh water, arrived safe at Bombay, whence he proceeded with all expedition to Bengal, was most happy in the execution of his commissions, at least in the prospect of their future and speedy accomplishment, and, loaded with presents and rewards, for his diligent and upright conduct, returned to England, what he called a rich man, for he had realised above three thousand pounds, besides the claim of growing benefits.

VOL. II.

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He enquired for Captain Overbury, but had the mortification to find he had left the metropolis, and was preparing, as a duty, to make a visit to his father, when he happened to see Mrs. Ellison in the front boxes at Covent-Garden theatre.

The tragedy of the Gamester was the dramatic bill of fare, and the tender Elfrida would have been distressed by the poet's pencil, if her husband, instead of being addicted to it, had entertained a dislike for the high-bred amusement of gaming; but situated as she was, she entered into every vicissitude, and felt the conclusion, a natural termination of the existence of a man precipitated from the elevation of hope, into the depths of disappointment; a transition that must fall with tenfold weight upon the heart with no resources in itself, and resting wholly upon the exterior of happiness.

Wilmot passed the evening in anxiously tracing the turns in Elfrida's countenance, who was too much taken up with the performance, to look for faces which she might know in the pit; and more particularly as her connexions were all of that rank, which made it very unlikely she could have a friend there.

Wilmot was not displeased to perceive, that she did not appear to be much delighted with her company; for, though people of fashion, they were not the people he could have

have wished her to approve; and, by dint of close observation and well-timed retiring, he enabled himself to discover her place of residence; then walked home more than usually disconsolate.

He every day resolved to leave town, yet every day deferred his departure, for which conduct he could no otherwise account, than from his disinclination to view a spot that might occasion him unending painful recollection.

He generally spent some hours at Will's Coffee-house, either morning or evening; it was in the neighborhood of Elfrida, and, therefore, an interesting kind of situation to him; being both generous and kind to the waiters, was a great favorite with them, in-somuch that it was a sort of contest with them who should attend the Gentleman in the Emperor's eye, the color of his coat.

One morning having read the papers, and finished his coffee, he was preparing himself for a solitary walk in the park, when one of the waiters hastily ran up to him, and begged he would come and prevent bloodshed; two gentlemen, said the young fellow, have drawn their swords upon each other above, and I fear there will be mischief.

Wilmot, ever obedient to the call of humanity, bid him lead to them, and soon drew near enough to hear the cause of their quarrel, and he thought the first voice that

reached his ear, was not unknown to him, though thick and tremulous with passion.

“And so, Sir,” said one of them, “you have drawn your sword upon me, and hold me to my defence, because I have made you an offer to restore the stake I have won, which is an handsome one, and as you have confessed to me, your all, if you will only give me a chance, by your introduction of me to your wife, for obtaining her *favor*, and have thus wound yourself up to the sanguinary attempt of running me through the body.”

“I have undone her,” replied the other, “but will die in defence of her spotless honor; she is an angel, my Lord, if I am a devil; but, come on, this to your wicked heart, for seeking to make a desperate husband a pander to his own wife, and that wife Elfrida Ellison.”

Wilmot had heard enough, and endeavored to enter the apartment, but the door was bolted, and Ellison’s arm prevailing, he ran his sword quite through his antagonist’s body, then wildly exclaimed, “the measure of my misery is now complete; I have not one friend on earth either to assist or pity me.”

As he uttered these words Wilmot forced the door, and supporting him, for he was, for some moments, incapable of supporting himself, he said, “you are happily mistaken,
for

for you have a friend in me who will do both."

"If it is possible you are a friend," said Ellison, "O fly to my house, break my destruction tenderly upon my Elfrida, save her from insult, and bid her not execrate the author of the scene of horror into which she will be plunged, and deliver that most amiable and injured woman, deliver her into the arms of her family; whilst I—"

"Courage," said Wilmot, "you have fought in a worthy cause; for, though I hold duelling to be the next crime to suicide, your provocation was so severe, that I wonder not at your conduct; and the world, when it hears your story, will acknowledge, that in the midst of your vices you have brilliant virtues; for, had I died by your hands, on a similar occasion, I would have died celebrating your honest prowess."

This Wilmot said to him, as he hurried him to the door of the coffee-house; and having fortunately got a Hackney coach, which was going by empty, he bid the fellow drive up St. Martin's-lane, beyond the church, and wait for him; saying, "Who knows what good news I may have for you, respecting the gentleman."

"Come with me," said Ellison, "that I may tell you all." Wilmot stepped into the coach, and the man obeyed the orders he had received.

"I must fly," said Ellison, "England is no longer a home for me."

"But how will you dispose of yourself," said Wilmot.

"I will go a volunteer to America, and die fighting for my king and country,"

"True," said Wilmot, "the French and Spaniards deserve we should meet them in the field, but you must not go without the means of subsistence; all I have about me shall be yours, and may it prove serviceable." He then produced notes, to the amount of an hundred and fifty pounds, which he pressed Ellison to accept; but he would only take the fifty; saying, his wife would stand in need of his generosity; then wringing his unknown friend by the hand, for in his distress he was unable to discover the features of Wilmot, and more particularly under the manly appearance a voyage to the East had given him.

"I will see you again," said Wilmot, quitting the coach as soon as it stopped, "so wait, I conjure you, my return."

He flew back to the coffee-house; the Gentleman was not dead, the sword had missed the vitals; and, though his condition was dangerous, the Surgeon who attended did not apprehend his wounds to be mortal. Conceiving himself the messenger of glad tidings, he hastened once more to Ellison, but Ellison, in despair, had ordered himself
to

to be conveyed (as Wilmot afterwards learned) into the city ; and, taking a chaise, set forward for Portsmouth, and from Portsmouth for America, without a moment's delay, but without any regular plan of procedure.

Wilmot, who flattered himself he should be before-hand with the harpies, now went to offer his services to Elfrida, but had the mortification to find her in the midst of the wreck, pale but composed, and without one person to support or comfort her.

He approached her ; " I am spared a tale, Madam, which I knew not how to tell you ; trust yourself with me, I will convey you to a place of shelter and safety."

" Wilmot," said Elfrida, " Wilmot a second time my deliverer ; (then correcting herself,) dispose of me," said she, " as your benevolence dictates ; I know by experience of how much virtue you are capable."

He conducted her to a coach which he had brought with him, and ordered the man to go to Bury-street, St. James's.

" The lodgings I shall give up to you," said Wilmot, " are not altogether worthy of you, but the people are good, and will reverse your misfortunes."

" I must not, I suppose, ask," said Elfrida, " what is become of my husband ? but, Sir, if his liberty is forfeited, I shall not hold myself entitled to be at large ; his

character is an extraordinary mixture of kindness and ill-humor, but all the returns of his heart, I can, with truth affirm, are to me, and he will be sensible of the attentions which the duty of a wife commands me to pay him."

"Mr. Ellison, Madam," returned Wilmot, "is free, but the nature of his circumstances require he should leave England, and I believe I may venture to tell you he is now many miles distant from London. I will write with all proper caution to Mr. and Mrs. Overbury, they can better come to you than you can go to them, for I have every reason to apprehend the Grange is amongst the number of the losses Mr. Ellison has sustained."

The coach now stopped, and Wilmot conducted Elfrida into a parlor, desiring that the mistress of the house would come to them, when Elfrida looking upon Wilmot's clothes, perceived them bloody, and cried out, "O Sir, what new alarms are these? my husband! has the friend of my infancy imbrued his hands in my husband's blood?"

"Dearest, best of women," said Mr. Wilmot, "do not torture yourself with needless apprehensions; the man before you would hold it blasphemy, with such pollution on his head, to approach you; but know Mr. Ellison has fought, nobly fought to chastise a titled villain, who, having plundered him of
his

his fortune, would have bought a passport, by a restoration of that plunder, for a most diabolical purpose to Mrs. Overbury's Elfrida; Ellison heard the proposal with horror, and rejected it with spirit; and this infamous man of fashion is now in the hands of his Surgeon."

She sunk upon the arm of her chair; then opening her eyes; "Heaven, in the midst of its wrath," said she, "has remembered mercy. I am happy, Mr. Wilmot, that neither my dear mother nor myself, have lost our friend in your person."

Mrs. Portman, the woman of the house, now presented herself, with fifty curtsies and five hundred apologies for the being taken at such an unawares, proposed a dish of coffee, as the best cordial for both lady and gentleman, after their fatigue; but Wilmot, finding Elfrida better, politely took his leave, to write, he said to Mr. Overbury.

To write—would it not be much kinder to fly down upon the wings of friendship? the man that was worth three thousand pounds must be a churl, to spare upon such an occasion; so sending a note to Mrs. Portman, conjuring her to call in a Physician, if necessary, and to spare no expence for the accommodation of Mrs. Ellison, he ordered a post-chaise and four, and throwing himself into it, set off for Bristol.

But recollecting the Lieutenant's old lodgings, and conceiving Mrs. Ellison might prefer being there, to even the best situation amongst strangers, he stopped the postillions, and bid them take him to York-street, a place, in his confusion, which he had quite forgot; and giving these friends of Mr. Overbury the general heads of Mrs. Ellison's unfortunate business, he besought them to render her their best services.

Fresh horses, and a judicious exercise of bribery and corruption to the postillions, so happily expedited him, that he arrived at the Grange before my Lord's myrmidons; and was petrified to behold the little boy and girl, whom he had taken under his protection at breakfast with the Lieutenant and his wife, as if quite at home, and under the paternal wing, and improved to a miracle.

He had, however, in his haste, still the same clothes on, and the hearts of his worthy friends were agonized. "Is Elfrida safe?" said they, and the wretched Ellison?"

"Both, both are safe," replied Wilmot; "but a change of fortune has taken place; the vice of gaming, which Mr. Ellison unhappily contracted, has robbed him of his last shilling, together with this house, and all that belongs to it. But, fallen as he is, I must teach you to respect him, (Mrs. Overbury sighed and looked at the children)
for

for he is no less the victim of virtue than of vice, upon this occasion ;” adding all the particulars.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbury were wrapped in astonishment; the little boy looked round him for a moment, and burst into tears.

“ Why weeps my little man?” said Wilmot.

“ Because *my* Captain is ill, said he, “ and you are ill (to Mrs. Overbury) and you are ill too (to Wilmot) and who will love me, if I lose you?”

Mrs. Overbury kissed both the children, for the girl was hanging about her in the utmost distress, and a servant was called to take them home; for, as it was Ellison’s house, the children were only visitants, not residents, under their friend’s roof.

Mrs. Overbury besought Wilmot not to sacrifice his life in the cause of her family, but that he would go to bed and take some repose; he refused until they had settled some plan of proceeding.

“ The post will arrive in the morning,” said the Lieutenant, “ and perhaps bring us notice of this melancholy event; it will not be right to quit the premises, until some proper person appears to take possession of them.”

The next morning a whole packet of letters were delivered to them, and a message from Wilmot’s father and mother, to enquire
after

after his health; "I protest," said he, smiling, "I forgot I had such tender relations upon earth, so wholly was my heart engrossed by friendship."

"This," said the Lieutenant, holding the letters in his hand, "is from Ellifon, and may deserve a speedy perusal."

Ellifon lamented the misery into which he had plunged their Elfrida; related that an unknown Gentleman, sent by Heaven, in the exigence of his distress, had furnished him with the sum of fifty pounds to enable him to go abroad, and had promised to put Elfrida safe into their parental protection.

This was a species of intelligence which was quite new to the Lieutenant and his wife, and would ever have remained so, if there had been no one but Wilmot to tell it, so incapable was he of doing honor to himself.

But Ellifon added, that being sensible and ashamed of the errors of his past life, he thought the least he could do was to endeavor to make some atonement; then stating the whole of the girl's seduction, and its consequences, he besought them to compassionate the helpless innocents, who had claims to *his* protection, as kindly as they did the infants they had already attached themselves to; informing Mrs. Overbury that he had put an hundred pounds for each of the children,
and

and fifty for the mother, into the hands of a Gentleman, who, upon his marriage, undertook to act for him, in obtaining them some decent situation, as she would find memorandums, with his address, in the bureau; and intreating them, again and again, to pardon him, he bid them adieu.

Mrs. Overbury was amazed, and Wilmot appeared unconscious of the whole transaction.

The next letter was from Lord S———'s lawyer, to give them notice he was commanded to take immediate possession of the Grange.

And the third was from Elfrida, telling them she was comfortably situated in their old lodgings, and only waited their coming to town, to prove to them how well she deserved to be poor, by shewing them she could enjoy poverty, or, at least, knew how to soften it by elegant industry.

This was a cordial; and Mrs. Overbury begged Wilmot would now leave them, and go to his father and mother.

Wilmot obeyed her, and told them sufficient of the motives of his sudden journey to plead his honorable excuse, for his seeming neglect of them.

In his return to the Grange, he took a turn round to Hannah, to conjure her to keep his secret respecting the children, and cleared Ellison's character of all but the sin
of

of seduction, by relating what he thought had been done for them, with the money, which he devoted honestly to their use, but which had been with-held, by one of his gay and false friends, from the poor girl, for purposes that spoke themselves, and baser still, which were prosecuted under the sanction of Ellifon's name.

Hannah was in raptures to see him ; placed a child upon each knee, and bid them, as soon as they welcomed, to fall down and ask a blessing of their benefactor ; she then ran on about her dreams and her tokens of his safe return, and of Ellifon's misfortunes ; concluding with entreating she might go up to attend upon Mrs. Ellifon.

" Alas, my good Hannah," said Wilmot, " all that is over, and the vanity of human wisdom strikingly exemplified in the failure of Mr. Overbury's politics ; his Elfrida was once poor and his daughter, she is now poor and the wife of Ellifon."

" Take care of the children," said he, " I have brought home a fortune for them ; the boy shall go to a school in Yorkshire, and the girl shall, perhaps, be the happy attendant of Mrs. Overbury and Elfrida ; she will be tall by my return from India, and I suppose I shall leave England in about twelve days."

Hannah declared herself convinced, there was not such another man in the world as
Mr.

Mr. Wilmot, and that she had her *bodings* he would some time or other be rewarded.

Wilmot, having performed all he had to do, found himself sensible of his great fatigue; for the night he had passed was a sleepless one; he therefore begged leave to retire to a chamber at the Grange for a few hours, when taking Elfrida's picture from an inside pocket of his coat, made for the purpose, and wishing composure to the mind of the original, as he always did before he went to rest, he lay down and slept till evening.

On the contrary, Hannah wept and sighed, and sighed and wept, the whole afternoon, until Richard's heart was quite overcome by her distress; he bid her make herself easy, and go up to her Mistress (as it could not be denied but they had the means) and attend upon her, as usual, until she could afford to keep another servant, and he would take every tender care of the children.

Wilmot was but just come down to tea, when Hannah, with an anxious joy in her countenance, appeared at the Grange, and being so happy as to find him alone in the parlor, she told him her design, or more properly her desire, respecting Mrs. Elison.

Wilmot shook her by the hand. "You possess, my good woman," said he, "one of the first blessings of existence, a feeling, a grateful,

grateful, a noble heart; but I foresee you will, upon this occasion, be disappointed; the Lieutenant will not, I am certain, consent to your leaving your family."

"Alack-a-day, Sir," said Hannah, "how you talk; Richard will, he says, take care of himself and the children, they will amuse and divert him; and what can I do better than live happily, if I even work hard? My time at home, Mr. Wilmot, is not spent in idleness; neither is it fitting it should, seeing I was born to no better inheritance than content and labor; and what says the proverb, they that will not earn shall want bread?"

Wilmot wanted no eloquence to persuade him of the propriety, as well as the benevolence of Hannah's conduct; her attendance upon, and care of Elfrida, would have given him the highest satisfaction, on his approaching voyage, but he knew the Lieutenant too well not to be aware of objections.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbury having joined them in the parlor, Wilmot, as counsel in the cause, his heart having accepted Hannah's brief (for, to love Elfrida, gave her much higher consequence with him than loving himself) opened Hannah's request upon the Lieutenant; who, as Wilmot had foreseen, *set his face directly against it*; it was not friendship, it was insanity; his income would barely support his family, without a servant,

servant, and no one should devote their time to him or his, whose time was their fortune, unrecompensed.

Wilmot had too much delicacy to hint his ardent wishes for their accommodation; had Elfrida not existed, he would, he fancied, have compelled the Lieutenant to treat him as a friend; but the woman of his heart undone by the man that had ever held him in scorn and contempt—he only sighed and was silent.

Hannah went away soon after, but wiping her eyes, and brightening up her looks, somewhat suddenly, together with a nod of no small significance, with which she honored Wilmot, as she departed, seemed to tell him, she would follow her own inclination.

Accordingly she set off that very night for the ferry, and putting herself, without delay, into one of the Bristol coaches, reached London before Mr. and Mrs. Overbury could make it convenient to leave the Grange.

The Lieutenant had made it so much his pleasure to cultivate his son-in-law's estate, from the hope and probability of his grandchildren enjoying it, that it was a severe stroke to him to quit it; insomuch that his look's seemed to say, with the father of mankind, in Milton, "and must I leave thee, Paradise, for ever leave thee," when the hour
came

came that obliged him to depart, though he affected to bear it with the philosophic feelings, the *stoicism* of resignation; and Mrs. Overbury was comforted by the idea of being re-united to Elfrida.

Hannah lost her way three or four times, in her eagerness to get at Mrs. Ellifon's lodgings, where, having gained admittance, she, on her knees, conjured her to forgive her, and not to break her heart by refusing her attendance; but to let her live with her, work for her, and see her happy.

Elfrida was much struck by this mark of genuine attachment. "I will not," said she, "my dear woman, oppose your wishes; you shall be my humble friend, my valued companion, and I will own it revives my spirits to see you."

This was sufficient. Hannah broke the tea-pot-lid, threw down three tea-cups, and overturned the toast and butter, in her zeal to serve Elfrida, and display her thankfulness.

Mrs. Ellifon enquired after her father and mother's health. "Aye, Madam," said Hannah, "and will you not remember poor Mr. Wilmot?"

"Where, how remember him!" said Elfrida.

"Why he travelled day and night down to the Grange," said Hannah, "with the bad news; stayed with Captain and Mrs. Overbury,

Overbury, to comfort and assist them, and returns with them to London, in his way to India. Well, if the proverb says true, that a friend in need is a friend indeed, what shall we not say in praise of Mr. Wilmot?"

"Noble and good," Elfrida said, "he was; and her father had obligations to him of the highest magnitude; but Heaven, she hoped, would reward him."

"Ah me," said Hannah, in the overflowings of her kindness for him, "Heaven itself, unless his mind is new made, can only, in one respect, either bless or—"

"My honest, worthy creature," said Elfrida, "recollect I am Mr. Ellison's wife, always recollect that, when you mention Mr. Wilmot to me, and you will not say what is improper for me to hear. I have not words to tell you how much I honor and esteem his character, and I am certain he holds the next place to their Elfrida, in my father and mother's affections."

"O Madam—well, I must not speak; we untaught people know no harm in these things, and cannot mean any by repeating them; but your mother calls him—indeed, Madam, she calls him her son."

"I know she does," replied Elfrida, "and I consider him as my brother; on this ground, my dear Mrs. Jenkins, we shall
ever

ever meet, and it is here I would wish you to draw the line."

"May be so," said Hannah, having walked into the next room, "but I shall never cease praying he may become your husband yet, before my head is laid low."

The third day after Hannah's arrival brought the Lieutenant, his wife, and Wilnot to town.

The Lieutenant pressed Elfrida to his bosom, and a tear stole down his manly cheek. "My want of confidence in Providence," said he, "my impatience to see you enriched, is punished on your innocent head; but my Elfrida will not only forgive, she will compassionate her fond father's unfortunate error."

"Dear Sir," said Mrs. Ellison, "am I not yours? and had you not a right to dispose of me as such? You know not how well I deserved to be poor, for you could have no idea how well it would become me, or with what alacrity I should exercise my little abilities to obtain a subsistence. Riches have in all ages," continued she, "made themselves wings, and flown away, but talents live as long as our reason remains unshaken, and you will soon find that Ella Overbury, by the constitution of her temper, was *made* for poverty."

Mr. Wilnot professed himself happy to see her look so well; adding, he should presume

sume to make the family a farewell visit before he left England.

Wilmot, the next day, waited upon Ellifon's false friend, and base destroyer of the friendless, for there could be little doubt that his with-holding what Ellifon intended for the poor seduced girl's provision, and the provision of her children, had cut her days short. He with-held it for a *pious* purpose that must be obvious.

In a word, it appeared, that knowing she was young, handsome, and in deep distress, he flattered himself he should purchase her with her own money; or, at best, by leaving her ignorant of what Ellifon had done for her, compel her, by stern, by keen necessity, to put herself into his power, and from these motives he had written her the letters, unauthorized by her seducer, and wholly unknown to him, which, by the insulting cruelty of the proposal they contained, had brought her to her grave.

He, however, finding himself detected, was forward to refund, and talked of a compensation, which Wilmot disdained, in the name of the little children, from the murderer of their defenceless mother; they will prosper, said he, my good Sir, in their undertakings much better without it.

The Gentleman, then, with the best grace he could assume, paid Wilmot what he had received

received from Ellifon ; and he bore it off with honest triumph.

The first suggestion of his heart upon this occasion was, to present the money to Elfrida, as a sum of Ellifon's, which he had recovered for her, and settle the children's business at some future period ; but then he was afraid he should leave a slur upon the character of an absent man, who was sufficiently blameable to need no additional obloquy ; besides the danger of Elfrida's penetrating the fraud, which to her nice sense of things, could not fail to be deemed a gross enormity ; for even Ellifon's memorandums would be doubted by the Lieutenant, unless the money was produced ; he, therefore, like a faithful steward, brought it to Mr. Overbury.

The Lieutenant was happy to find the innocent children would not suffer by the change in Mrs. Ellifon's fortune ; and Wilmot, sensible they no longer stood in need of his support, proposed a compromise with the Lieutenant, if he would not insist upon reimbursing what he had expended upon the infants, to forbear, for the present, from all acts of bounty towards them ; affirming, nevertheless, that, conscientiously speaking, he should commit a robbery, by applying to his own use, what he had obtained under covenant, as it were, with Heaven, to devote to their service ; though, in truth, he had no
conception

conception his voyage would have proved so fortunate; he deferred the point to Mr. Overbury's decision, as a casuist, who gave it against him, that is, in disfavor of the children; but Wilmot said, he would never, while he lived, impertinently break in upon the protection they enjoyed, but that at his death, he should consider them his lawful heirs, as far as the sum he then possessed amounted to.

AN APPLICATION.

Elfrida, out of tenderness to her mistaken father, bore her change of situation with a fortitude and composure, which would not have dishonored Seneca himself; not a tear, nor a sigh, escaped her. "Behold," she would say to her mother, "how unnecessary our cruel separation to make me rich; for the very evil that others torture themselves so much about, sits quite easy upon my feelings. I will, as soon as we are settled a little, strike out some method for deriving emolument from my talents; this is the age of liberality, and my pencil shall bring its industry decent rewards; tambour, embroidery, netting, I am perfectly mistress of; and, O insult me not so far as to call it degrading, to make use of the weapons with which God and nature has furnished me,

me, to defend myself against the dæmon poverty. It is true," continued she, "that with the humble wishes we possess, your income, my dear father, is sufficient to keep us, what pride, a false, mean pride, calls independent; but should Heaven think fit to deprive me of my parents, what will now be my amusement, would, perhaps, be a toil to me; do yourselves then the justice to *see*, and me the pleasure to approve my conduct, and you will give the blessing of peace to your Elfrida."

"Patience on a monument," the Lieutenant would say to Mrs. Overbury, "smiling at grief."

Wilmot's benevolent heart forgot its own cares in Elfrida's, and he lamented his want of power to do her some essential good; the idea of her working for her living, as she calmly called it, made him frantic; yet with the whole Eastern world at his feet, it would have been impossible, as she was situated, to impart any portion of it to her.

But whilst Wilmot was thus tormenting himself, that he could not be actively employed in her accommodation, Elfrida was plotting how to render his friendship useful to her, by way of agreeable surprize, at some future day, for her beloved father and mother.

She accordingly, with the assistance of Hannah and Mrs. Dawson, the woman of the

the house, having bound them both down by a solemn promise of secrecy, not to betray her, to her paternal friends, disposed of her whole wardrobe and little ornaments, which her fall from affluence, she said had made idle possessions to her, except a mulberry lutestring gown and petticoat, which, by the way, though unknown to herself, was a most becoming color to her for her best; her morning-dresses to be converted into plain night-gowns, with suitable linen for her common appearance, and in very moderate quantities, was the whole of her reserve; and, as her husband's gambling stake did not include what belonged to her person, except a pair of diamond ear-rings and a repeater that ran upon brilliants, which he had bought her, though her clothes were sold under all the disadvantages of second-hand wearables, by the addition of her little trinkets, she found herself mistress of an hundred and ninety pounds; when sending for Wilmot, the following morning, before her father and mother were up, she spread out her wealth before him, saying, "Behold, Sir, am I much to be pitied?"

Wilmot called up a kind of melancholy smile and shook his head.

Elfrida proceeded; "But, as in my situation it is incumbent upon me to improve my fortune at all points, I have taken the liberty of asking your company at this early

hour, to entreat, as an additional act of friendship, you will be so kind as to lay out the hundred pounds, in such ventures as promise the best emoluments in India, and I will thankfully receive from you the genuine profits. You will easily conjecture, that this money is the produce of my now useless articles of dress,; and I am persuaded it will give you pleasure to know, even with this chance of mercantile advantage, that I am not destitute of a resource in case of the exigencies of sickness to myself, or those I revere; otherwise I mean to turn hoarder, and hold it untouched, till by the exchange of my ventures, I am authorized to fly out a little in my expences, when I shall also know how to be extravagant."

Wilmot could not reply.

"Thus you see, Sir," continued Elfrida, with undissembled delight, for she felt herself, as it were, actually abounding, "the mind you have to deal with; confer one favor, and you shall be solicited for another; but this matter must not transpire beyond the knowledge of Hannah, you and myself."

Wilmot took up the notes, and, in silence, put them carefully in his pocket-book; but made a most disjointed speech of his happiness, and his hopes, and his concern, and his fears, and his astonishment, and his admiration;

tion; then bowed, hesitated, bowed again, and retired.

"If ever there was—" said Hannah.

"Come, come, Mrs. Jenkins," said Elfrida, "it is not at this time of day that I am to learn either Mr. Wilmot's merits, or your high sense of them; and so, without troubling yourself farther upon the subject, let us turn our thoughts to getting breakfast ready."

"It is very hard, though," said Hannah, "that people may not speak what is right and fit to be spoken, and that they must neither weep nor rejoice but by rule; whereas reason—"

Elfrida gathered up the ninety pounds, and, highly pleased with her morning's transaction, left Hannah to finish her harangue alone; nor did she return to the parlor until she heard her father and mother were there; when, in consequence of her success, as she told Hannah, she added a pot of coffee to their usual breakfast, knowing her father was fond of it; and, with unusual cheerfulness said, when she presented him his cup, "Come, my dear Sir, let us not despair; are we not very comfortable? and is not that a gigantic step towards happiness?"

"My child, my best beloved Elfrida," the Lieutenant could say no more, and Mrs. Overbury embraced her daughter, cry-

ing, "Yes, Elfrida, we are, we shall be comfortable."

Wilmot saw the generosity of what Elfrida called her self-interested conduct; her love for her father and mother, and her friendly concern for his feelings; "She could not accept my pecuniary services," said he, "and so contrived to shew me she did not stand in immediate need of them, and this in so delicate, so amiable a manner, that the daughter, the friend, the wife, were before his eyes, at once, and thus united touched his heart; sacred character, exalted tenderness, angelic purity! if she *had* an equal upon earth, it was impossible she could have a superior. She was all the kind Gods could impart, but the kind Gods had given her to Ellifon, and he could only lament and adore.

Elfrida's next care, but with the utmost privacy, was to get employment; she cut and painted watch-cases, painted ribbons, drew valentines with elegant devices, and supplied a shop with artificial flowers; in a word, she seemed to lose herself, and all her disappointments, in the prosecution of her industry; and when her father and mother expressed their astonishment, for Mrs. Overbury often surprized her at work, "O, I have often told you how well it would agree with me to be poor."

Though

Though the Lieutenant was too good to torment his wife with his self-reproaches, they became every day more and more inexpressible; "My beautiful, my most injured Elfrida," he would say, when he had an opportunity of soliloquising, "had your father not been deaf to the voice of nature, and the pleadings of truth, instead of the widowed wife he has rendered you, after every violence your tender mind must have sustained, you would now have been enabled to unite yourself to the object of your infant election, whose spirit and integrity, in the execution of his East-Indian commission, has done away the only objection that could be set up against him; had I not known his worth, or your repugnance to marry Ellison, I should be somewhat excuseable, but I had my sacrifice in the midst of my better knowledge, and I have destroyed my own peace, by the unnatural wound I have given yours. Children, that in a flight of romance," he would say, "or the darings of disobedience, rush forward to the altar, and, regardless of every consequence, wed vice or penury, to fill up the measure of their undutifulness, or to please their idle fancy, they deserve the galling fetters, my ambition formed for my most amiable, and well distinguishing child; my child, who only solicited her own right, the right of a negative, where her inclinations prompted her not to engage, and who

would have submitted her *will*, in every other instance, to parental controul and parental regulation. Wretched that I am, why did I refuse her a chance for obtaining the youth whom she so deservedly loved, and who, like the Patriarch of old, would have served two seven years to commerce, unrepining, to have made himself acceptable."

Wilmot's embarkation drew near, and Mr. Overbury, who spent almost every evening with him at the coffee-house, was distressed to part with him, for Wilmot had intreated him to meet him at the coffee-house, under pretence of business, but, in reality, from the discomposure which the presence of Elfrida always threw him into, and which he was unable to conceal.

He, therefore, talked of business which required his attendance; and, though Mr. Overbury plainly saw his motive, the better to support the honest deception, he would order himself to be called aside, and rejoin the Lieutenant with the air of a man whose hands were crowded with important concerns.

One business he had, indeed, embarked in, the Grange-house was advertised to be sold; and, sensible what a favorite spot it was to the Lieutenant, and next door, as it were, to what Mrs. Overbury was born to the inheritance of, he could not bear the thought of its being purchased by a stranger; he, therefore,

therefore, got one of the Gentlemen, whose East-India agent he was, to purchase it, with the little demesne around it, of about two hundred pounds a year, in trust for him, paying down fifteen hundred pounds, and agreeing to have possession as soon as he could clear off the additional sum requisite to constitute him master of it.

Having made his will, which he left in Mrs. Overbury's care, and set every thing in order, the Lieutenant asked him, in the character of guardian of the little Frederic (so called after his father by that Gentleman's appointment) to take him to sea.

"He is now," said he, "in the seventh year of his age, and may go out as a Guinea-pig, and learn navigation at the fountain-head of instruction, the school of experience, but bring him me back, Wilmot, when you return, let what fortunate chance may await him, for I shall wish him ultimately to fix in England."

Every one approved of this request, but Frederic was in raptures, and walking into the city one day with Wilmot, "Are you not, Sir," said he, "my own papa, for Hannah tells me you saved me from ruin, and have taken care of me above three years. Could my own papa have done more?"

"Hannah," said Wilmot, "is a busy-body, and talks about things she neither

knows nor understands; I am not your father, my dear, but will always be your affectionate friend."

Mrs. Ellison kissed the little sailor, and put the three new sixpences in his trowsers-pocket to remember her by, she said, but Frederic would not receive them upon such terms, for he would shew her he would not forget her, for the kindnesses she had done him; she then assured him she only joked, for that she gave them to him to make a man of him.

Mr. Overbury fitted him out from his own little fortune, insisting upon it, it would be lucky; and when the hour of leave-taking arrived, he shook hands with them all; and, finding he must cry, complained Ella, as Mrs. Overbury had had his sister christened, had put her finger in his eye; for he would not own the water was tears, because Hannah told him she should die with shame for him, if he cried on going abroad with Mr. Wilmot; and Mr. Wilmot saw the second time arrive when the world of waters were to roll between him and Elfrida.

But, though he had borne Mrs. Ellison's misfortunes with fortitude, whilst he was in the same section of the globe, he no sooner lost sight of England, and, in succession, the European coast, than he felt the full force of her situation upon his heart.

Deprived

Deprived of her husband, her ample provision, and without other consolation than reposing, in her hour of affliction, upon the maternal bosom, his mind, when dwelling, as it too frequently would, upon these cutting circumstances, was all a choas; he recalled to his remembrance every soft and delightful moment he had enjoyed with her; her sensible conversation, her innocent, her beautiful person, her numberless accomplishments, her sweetness of temper, her rectitude of conduct; and, agonized at fate, had she been mine! he would exclaim, when he had an opportunity of soliloquising, there would, at least, have been some stability in her fortune; ruin would never have approached her; yet for her sake I will not suffer sorrow to prey upon my spirits; I feel myself, as it were, the last and only unrent ligament of her prosperity; for, whatever wealth Heaven is pleased to pour into my lap, shall, by some happy devise, be rendered useful to her; and, for her sake, I will avail myself of my flattering prospects.

Wilmot, this voyage, left his beloved pigeon behind him, in Mrs. Overbury's care, for he had his apprehensions that the keen little Frederic might surprize him in one of his melancholy humors, calling upon the bird, as was his frequent custom, to bear witness to the happiness he had known,

and the wretchedness into which he was now plunged, a behavior ill calculated for spectators of any age or connexions, and particularly for a boy, who would, most probably, relate every extraordinary thing he saw (and what could appear more extraordinary to a child than to see a rational man playing the lunatic ?) to the parties, from whom, of all others upon earth, he wished most to hide his unbendings, for the knowledge of them would not only give his friends pain, upon his account, but cause them to fold themselves up in a reserve, whenever his return enabled him again to approach them.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbury could talk of nothing but Wilmot; discovering, however, at length, that Elfrida always found excuses for retiring, when he was the subject of their warm encomiums, they reserved them for their private hours, and she ceased to withdraw herself from their social converse.

The truth was, that Elfrida did not think it strictly proper, in her state of affairs, to have Wilmot always in her heart, or to spend her life in the recollection of past scenes, which, though innocent as the dreams of infancy, were not, she conceived, unisons to the feelings of an unhappy wife, as they held up perpetually to her eyes the unfavorable contrast between the husband, whom her father had given her, and the friend she had

had lost; but even this was a piece of self-denial, a sacrifice to the world's opinion, and the world's customs, and she called it so once to her mother.

But, besides her desire to guard every mental and personal act, for her own satisfaction, Hannah was so much one of them, as to be often present without their advertising to it; and the ignorant, though well-meaning and good creature, looked upon all approbation of the other sex, to verge naturally and finally towards love and matrimony; she was, therefore, fearful, lest being mistaken, she might be harmlessly misrepresented by her, and her hitherto spotless fame contract an undue shade, when every sentiment her heart entertained towards Wilmot, abstracted from the preference she imbibed for him in her infancy, were such as friendship and gratitude alone dictated, and compatible with her duty both to God and man.

AN OVERTURE.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbury, Elfrida, Hannah, and the little Ella, by the exertions of reason, and the happy effects of piety, passed their time tranquilly together; Elfrida called Ella her pupil, and took real delight in cultivating her mind and manners; and the
child,

child, from a natural quickness and docility of disposition, did no small honor to her amiable preceptress.

During this calm period the Lieutenant was one morning surprized by a letter from the War-office, accompanied with a Captain's commission in a regiment stationed at Portsmouth.

The husband, wife, and daughter, stared upon each other, their thoughts wandered up and down for the source, and at last rested upon Wilmot.

"Noble fellow," said Mrs. Ellison, "I almost envy him his feelings; you are, my dear father, the very character a worthy mind must delight to honor."

Mr. Overbury waited upon the under Secretary, and was, by him, introduced to the Nobleman who presided in the war department; his Lordship shook him condescendingly by the hand, saying, "I shall set this one appointment down as an apology, an atonement, Captain Overbury, for all the errors of office which I may commit. Men, in my station, seldom have the pleasure of repairing the injustice of ignorance or inattention, by drawing merit like yours from obscurity, and rescuing their Sovereign from the reproach of having neglected a brave and worthy character; I congratulate myself, Sir, upon the occasion.

As

As this appointment commanded residence, Elfrida, though reluctantly, was obliged to give up several of her industrious engagements; she brought forth a moiety of her hidden treasures, and insisted upon its being applied to the purpose of fitting them out for their place of destination, and her mother wept at the, till then, undiscovered disposal, of what her daughter called her gay trappings, but Mrs. Overbury the proper apparel of her child. "As Mrs. Ellison, I grant you, Madam," said she, "but your Elfrida is not entitled to a more expensive exterior than she now enjoys. I thought, my dear mother, you had distinguished better than to conceive finery had any thing to do with happiness."

Elfrida felt herself much interested in the weather; tempests alarmed her, both for the sake of her husband and her father's benefactor; she read the public prints with a beating heart; the name of the East, or the West Indies, threw her into tremors, whenever they met her eye; but she covered all her enquiries and anxieties, under the desire to entertain those she loved with the knowledge of how the world went.

When every thing was ready for their journey, Mr. Overbury was surprized with a most extraordinary visitor, a Gentleman from the Nobleman who had won Ellison's fortune, to beg they would admit his Lordship

ship upon their acquaintance list, an honor he was most ambitious of.

Captain Overbury, with all the temper he could command, declined the overture; "An acquaintance with my humble family," said he, "could afford a man of Lord S—'s polish, very little satisfaction; a family that is humble, not from birth or education, but from choice; I mention not this, Sir," continued he, "from vanity, but merely to prove to you, that his Lordship's condescension would have little merit in our sight, for we should be undazzled by his superiority, and uninterested by his accomplishments; in a word, our walks in life are marked by the hand of Heaven far asunder, and I must, therefore, be excused, if, without one qualifying speech, I affirm, our intercourse must finish here."

Lord S—— was not, however, to be so easily repulsed; the Gentleman messenger was dispatched, a second time, to profess his Lordship's deep contrition for his past conduct, his lamentings that Mr. Ellifon was not in London, and to hint, in pretty intelligent terms, a desire to restore what the chance of the cards had made him master of.

Mr. Overbury paused—"Far be it from me, Sir," at length, said he, "to check the good purposes of any heart; but you will please to desire his Lordship, in my name,
to

to recollect the delicacy of our situation, and he will soon perceive how impossible it must be for us, in my son's absence, to reap any advantage from his generosity.

"The world, Captain Overbury, I grant you," said the Gentleman, "is very impertinent, and merit will ever have its attendant shade; but, in the name of common sense, let not those scare-crows, envy and ill-nature, have terrors for a mind like yours."

"Sir, Sir," replied Mr. Overbury somewhat impatiently, notwithstanding all his resolutions to be calm, "you, as well as his Lordship, little know the difference between fashionable honor and genuine honesty; they are, indeed," continued he, "lines of conduct, which, however, in a few instances, they may seem to be verging towards the same point, must evermore fly off from each other in their terminations; our connexions, therefore, as well as our conference, I take upon me to declare, with the spirit of an independent, and I hope I may venture to say, an undeviating individual, *shall* end here."

Lord S——, finding he was thrown out upon this occasion, comforted himself with the reflection that there were other avenues of access to the all-lovely Elfrida, whose person he had long been enamored of. He accordingly resolved, that neither the freezing reception which his *worthy* agent had met

met with, or the Roman virtue of Mr. Overbury's character, should deter him from beginning his insidious attacks on new grounds; "I have a scheme," said he to this agent, "in embryo, which, if well followed up, may answer all my wishes."

Mrs. Overbury and Elfrida were astonished at what they heard.

"Ah, my dear," said Mrs. Overbury, "ought you not to have given his Lordship's penitentials fair play; the fortune Mr. Elifon lost, ought not to be sacrificed to punctillio."

"Heavens," cried the Captain, "is he not the wretch that would have bought my child of her own husband? Eternal silence seal our lips respecting him."

In the Portsmouth stage-coach was an elderly lady of a very agreeable appearance; she shed tears on contemplating Elfrida's face; it was so like a dear child she had buried a few years before, and she had a son in the navy very like her; but that she should not wish to introduce him to the young lady, for obvious reasons; he was young and susceptible, she the most finished of nature's works.

"Their child," Captain Overbury said, "was very well; but those who formed a judgment of her merit, from her person only, would make a false estimate of it, for she was the best of children and of wives."

"Wives,"

"Wives," repeated the old Lady, "so young and already wedded."

The Captain answered in the affirmative; but added, that her husband was gone abroad, and she, very properly, returned to the parental roof.

The old Lady sighed, approved his sentiment, as she called it, and changed the subject.

She had, indeed, two sons, the old Lady said, one of which lived in London, and the other was expected every hour from the East-Indies.

(Elfrida without being sensible of it had a sigh escaped her.)

Expected, she said, with the next fleet; she, therefore, with the impatience natural to such a situation, was going down to reside upon the spot where the India-ships usually made their first halt, and should be glad of the pleasure of their acquaintance.

Mr. Overbury told her theirs was not a casual visit, but that Portsmouth would be their place of future residence, and that his family, he was certain, would be glad to improve their accidental knowledge of each other.

AN INTIMACY.

Mrs. Felton, for so this old Gentlewoman was named, paid close court to the Overburys, had the address to pass herself off for a very good sort of a woman; and, from one incident or other, six months passed away before her eldest son, in whose praise she was most profuse, came down to see her.

He was dressed very plain, but appeared well-bred, and well informed; they dined by invitation at Captain Overbury's, and the innocent Elfrida treated him with great civility.

"What a family they are," said Lord S—— (for this eldest son of the good Mrs. Felton, was no other than that noble peer)

"what a family these Overburys are; yet, though their queer notions are baneful to my wishes, I will not deny they have something pretty in them, even to a common observer."

"Your Lordship," said Mrs. Felton, "does not, I hope, call yourself a common observer, who has a nicer ear, or a more penetrating eye? Not a beauty of Mrs. Elifson's face, I am satisfied, escaped your notice, and yet you was present to every occasion, appeared with all the spruce and humble
ble

ble merit of my son, a London clerk ; I am astonished at your gifts of countenance."

"Why, you know, Felton," said his Lordship, "I am a tolerable good actor ; but I will own to you, I fear the part I have now undertaken, will prove above my powers ; the task I mean too arduous for me to accomplish ; that woman's mind, like another Troy, would stand a ten years' siege, but would not be won at last ; and where the comparison fails, my despair, of course, begins ; in three words, I deem it wholly impregnable ; it must be our first care not to startle her, the next to win her confidence ; security may do much for us ; but our measures must be the measures of the moment, for premeditation would be insanity, where not a single step depends upon ourselves. It was sacrilege to bestow such a woman upon Ellison."

Elfrida, notwithstanding her father's promotion, plied her needle and her pencil, to keep her, she said, in practice, and fill up her hours, for that when employed she reckoned time by the *short*, when idle, by the *long minutes*.

Hannah was called back to the village of the Grange, by the news that her husband was dying of a fever, and so rapid was his disease in its ravages, that he died before she arrived ; upon this melancholy event, she entreated to be received into Mr. Overbury's

ry's house, never to quit it more; a fall from his horse was the first cause of Richard's illness; and Hannah having buried him decently, and gathered up her little effects, set off upon her return to Portsmouth, as per invitation, under the hand writing of Miss Ella, as Secretary for Mrs. Overbury, to live and die with them.

Mrs. Ellison, Hannah, and the little girl, walked round the ramparts every day, at so unfashionable a time, as never to be met by any but humble strollers; and frequently, to vary the scene, they would go to the top of Postdown-hill, cross over from the dock-gate to Gosport, and take a turn through the fortifications; or, which was equally private, at certain parts of the day, go over the dock-yard and view its wonders; for to Elfrida it was wonderful to trace naval architecture, step by step, from the laying of the keel, to the skeleton ribs, the decking, the upper works, the masting, and the rigging, and then behold the perfect work launched upon the bosom of the deep, a British tower of defence against her enemies.

Lord S——'s visits to Portsmouth were short, and his walks cautiously taken; for, though with the amiable and unsuspecting family he passed current for Mrs. Felton's son, he having before had a frolic or two of the same spirited kind, was fearful of pre-
mature

mature detection; and the slightest hint would have been sufficient to have put the Captain upon his guard, all open as he was to attacks, until alarmed.

"Would it not be useful, said Lord S—" observing what a favorite Hannah was with Elfrida, "to take notice of that awkward woman, called Jenkins, she is their friend much rather than their servant, and methinks we might pick something out of her."

Hannah, who looked upon Mrs. Felton as a great Gentlewoman, was not a little flattered by her condescension; condescension was, however, according to her account, an infallible mark of high birth, and genteel breeding; no upstart she in Britain, she would be bound for it, would have invited a plain hard-working woman to drink tea with her, and taken the same notice of her, for all the world, as if she was her fellow-companion, as Mrs. Felton had done by her; and then she was so fond of Mrs. Ellison, thought her very handsome, but what of that, she said, no one would ever remember Mrs. Ellison's person, when they once came to know her mind, for it was there she was charming above all her sex. Moreover, Mrs. Felton was the most *pious* woman Hannah had ever met with, with her prayer-book and her bible continually by her; and so shocked, if the sacred name,
as

as she called it, of Heaven, was prophaned, and so good to children, that Miss Ella must not have had a heart, not to have had it won by her.

And thus did another six months elapse, without my Lord's making one advance nearer the accomplishment of his wishes, than the day the worthy family left London, except that Mrs. Felton had gained so far upon their good opinion, that they were glad to see her at all hours, an indulgence she availed herself of in its fullest extent, running in and out their house like a tame animal, until at length she came to the knowledge of Elfrida's industry.

Mrs. Felton was amazed. "You work for your living," said she, "and not for your amusement! Heaven and earth! I shall never recover myself! You, who would do honor to a coronet! Mercy on me, I shall never get over it! I shall break my heart to think of it!"

"O dear Madam," said Mrs. Ellifon, "those who are called to experience the transitions I have done, have quite a different estimate of life, to the ambitious, the delicate, or the vain; you find it hurt me not in your judgment, for you have frequently, with a politeness that pains me, imputed ease, elegance, and education, to my manner and appearance; and yet this elegant, and this accomplished young woman,

man, was, at these very periods, under engagements of industry for the London shops, and now dispatching the labors, and now reviewing the fruits of her industry."

"You may say what you please," cried Mrs. Felton, "but it is a cutting discovery."

The truth indeed was, that Mrs. Felton had a tolerable knowledge of the female heart, and was convinced, that the private was the undisguised moment, for many and many a young damsel had she met with, in the course of her honorable profession (for the fact was, that Mrs. Felton was a finished procurefs) who appeared all that was amiable in woman, and who had so dexterously kept up the ball, that she was on the point of giving them up as invincible, until a lucky intrusion into their privacy gave her the felicity to find, that these very discreet, these very demure, and these very sentimental ladies, loved idleness, or dress, or good eating and drinking, or gay authors (a most favorable symptom) or had some other characteristic foible, which, from not having the power to gratify, they had the address to conceal, and thereby enabled herself to suit the bait to the appetite; she had gained the victory, in the instant she conceived herself foiled, and triumphed, as it were, in the very arms of disappointment.

Upon

Upon this discovery, respecting Elfrida, she was in total despair; for to meet with a heart, which not only dared to be poor, but delighted in employment, so deranged her, that she wrote to his Lordship to come down immediately.

My Lord taking it into his head to fancy that his successful hour was arrived, was unspeakably chagrined to hear her declare that her hopes were at an end; "For, could you have imagined such a thing possible," said she, "that all lovely woman has a soul as free from ambition, folly and vanity, as her face is from blemish, and is, at this very instant, to the eternal disappointment of your Lordship's schemes, working for her bread; or, which is the same thing, to make a reserve for herself and her mother, in case of their surviving the Captain. No, no, my Lord, had she but complained to me of her fallen state, had she but confessed her situation, moping for ever by the side of her father and mother irksome, had I but found her at her looking-glass, that corruptor of young minds, and altar of pride, for when men conceive they have once undermined the virtue of one of these Narcissus' in petticoats, she is much rather self-betrayed, than the dupe of her lover's arts; had she, in short, my Lord, one assumed virtue, or one latent vice, I would have pledged myself for your obtaining her, but the symptoms are mortal,

tal, and portend the death of your attempts."

"And is there no way of sapping, of storming, of surprizing the garrison," said his Lordship, "no centinel that can be bought up, no Argus that can be laid asleep; for Mrs. Felton, I am determined, and it is now, I believe, no longer in my choice, by what means, either by stratagem or violence, to have her in my possession."

"Why then, my Lord," said Mrs. Felton, "it is my opinion, you must raise the siege for the present, and defer the opening of the next campaign until the enemy can be drawn out of her strong hold, to which the approaching winter will be most unfavorable. In plain English, you must wait till May or June before you take another step."

"A very pretty task, Mrs. Felton, you are setting my patience; this, I take it, is the first week in October, and she has already seen a year and a half at Portsmouth; but a-propos," cried his Lordship, "the Captain, in the long story, he tells of his child's being carried away upon the water, teaches us how to manage, situated as we are upon the sea-coast, so we will look forward, to prevailing upon her to enter into some water expedition, when, under favor of the winds and waves, we will bear her to some happy spot, and, perhaps, without so much

as asking her consent, draw her into a little trip to France, in all which, you, Mrs. Felton, must accompany us."

"Your Lordship knows you may always command me," said Mrs. Felton, "but it strikes me it would be polite to have another fellow-voyager. Mrs. Hannah's curiosity is at least equal to her simplicity, and the name of a ghost will at any time frighten her from her station, as a watch-woman over the safety of her beloved mistress; there is magic to her feelings in the very sound."

"You have hit the mark at last, said his Lordship, "and we have only to follow it up to be successful."

Whenever Mrs. Felton had an opportunity she artfully filled Hannah's head full of sea expeditions. "About nine miles from hence," she would say to her, "is the Isle of Wight, and if your family was not so particular, what a pretty party we might make, some time or other, when my son comes down, with a few *genteel* stores, and a little music; and then, Mrs. Jenkins, you would see what it was to go to sea, and to be upon pleasure-parties on the water, and I am sure you would like it vastly, if we could contrive to bring it about."

This idea having taken possession of Hannah's brain, she longed as much for the return of summer as his Lordship did, and
Mrs.

Mrs. Ellifon having a complaint in her stomach, which the apothecary was fearful tended to a consumption; he was led by Mrs. Felton, who, from complimenting his medical skill, and paying him handsomely for any little attendance she stood in need of, had acquired a great ascendancy over him, to prescribe sea-sickness for her cure.

Hannah, catching at the sound, cried, "Oh, Madam, do go with Mrs. Felton to the Isle of Wight, she has promised to take me as soon as the weather is fine; it will do you a monstrous deal of good."

Mrs. Ellifon told Mrs. Felton the apothecary's opinion; she affected surprise, "But, to be sure," said she, "he must know best; and if you are inclined to make the experiment, we will, somehow or other, go as far as the Island; but, unless Captain and Mrs. Overbury will favor us with their company, it must be when my son is here, for we cannot go, with either safety or propriety, unless we have the likeness of a man to attend us."

Mr. Overbury said he was not fond of the water, and Mrs. Overbury declared she would not go without him.

"But," said the Captain, "if a little snug party can be made up, of which Hannah's eyes informs me she would be happy to participate, both your health and amusement, my dear Elfrida, might be promoted; and, in-

deed, it would be desirable to engage you in a pleasant excursion, for you confine yourself too much."

Elfrida did not oppose, which was looked upon by Mrs. Felton to be the same thing as consenting to the proposal, and she informed my Lord, that they were got a few points nearer their wishes.

May proved a very cold month, and June was so intensely hot that they had frequent thunder-storms; Lord S——— was frantic; but, at last, he had the extatic pleasure of seeing preparations going forwards, under the authority of Mrs. Ellison's absolute engagement, and the day appointed, at the distance of only two days.

Hannah was lifted out of herself with joy, she had a new cap provided for the occasion, a gown of Mrs. Cluwyd's, given by Elfrida, was brought out, which had the very air of Westminster-abbey, and seemed risen from the tombs; and never child longed for a school-ball, as she did for the sixth of June.

The sixth of June came, and Mrs. Ellison proposed Ella's going, but the child said, she should be terrified at the sea, and would much rather stay with Captain and Mrs. Overbury.

Elfrida was dressed in virgin white, and might have sat for the emblem of the golden age, for innocence and peace beamed forth
in

in her countenance ; we shall say nothing of Hannah, but my Lord exchanged a significant look with Mrs. Felton, on beholding her, and the word *outré*, caught Elfrida's ear, she smiled at the contrast, for there was no denying that my Lord's polish and Hannah's simplicity were a wide distance from each other.

They embarked with prosperous gales, and every prospect of pleasure and enjoyment, when having run through the fleet at Spithead, the off-shore from the Island, a circumstance that Elfrida was not aware of, and got below South-sea Castle, and Cumberland-fort, and so fairly clear of the shore, as to have nothing to fear from observation or assistance, my Lord began to be very assiduous about Mrs. Ellison.

She was displeased but not alarmed, repented of her expedition but dreamed not of her danger ; her worst conclusion was, that the young man might not be quite sober, and, therefore, too probably, very troublesome ; and she endeavored, without shewing her full dissatisfaction, to change her seat.

He took both her hands in his, and prevented her intention, swore they were the handsomest ever formed, kissed them once, twice, thrice.

Mrs. Ellison insisted upon his altering his behavior, and begged Mrs. Felton would

make her relation sensible of its impropriety.

Mrs. Felton laughed, "parties of pleasure admitted," she said, "of innocent freedoms, and so lovely a woman as Mrs. Ellison, must not wonder to find an adorer in every man of sensibility and spirit that approached her."

Encouraged by this speech, Lord S—— had the audacity to snatch a kiss, Elfrida disengaged herself with all the dignity and all the resolution of offended virtue; and Hannah, perceiving how the case stood, gave him an honest and smart box on the ear, and bid him learn better manners.

"We shall humble your mistress' pride," said he, "and revenge that blow before to-morrow morning."

"Where are we going, Mrs. Felton," said Elfrida, with all the composure she could assume.

"To some happy Island," said Mrs. Felton, theatrically, "in the watry waste."

Mrs. Ellison had forgot she was young, and handsome enough to excite designs, and would as soon have thought of their running away with Hannah; she was, however, impatient to be set on shore; any where on shore, she said, and her fears operated so strongly upon her mind, that her sickness was no more.

Lord

Lord S—— now threw himself at her feet, and, in the spirit of romantic gallantry, exclaimed,

“ *Such Helen was, and who could blame.*”

Hannah, with all her simplicity, knowing well the beauty of her mistress, began, from his Lordship's behavior, to have no doubt of their real situation; she was, therefore, resolved to play off Ellison upon them, as she called every stroke off *finesse* or cunning, and whispering Mrs. Felton, said, she thought the Gentleman had better defer making love to her mistress, (though to be sure it was fine to hear him) until they got on shore, lest she should fret herself ill, and they should not know what to do with her; and that, moreover, it was not unlikely, if she was frightened, but she might fall into fits.

Felton, who set Hannah down for a guileless animal, thought there was meaning in what she said; and, calling her wicked employer to the other end of the boat, advised him, upon Hannah's authority, to reserve the declaration of his passion for their evening's entertainment, when they were got into harbor; but his Lordship having, what he conceived, broken the ice, was resolved to proceed, and either win her consent, he said, or form his resolutions how to treat her, before they quitted their bark.

He accordingly, upon his return to Elfrida, who, though she made the attempt, could not get at the speech of Hannah, to communicate her distress; without farther preface, told her he was not what he appeared, but a Gentleman, who had long been dying for her, adding his fortune, power, and determination to compel her to accept his proposals, omitting only his name, lest, upon her husband's account, it might excite her disgust; concluding with the tremendous assertion, that it depended upon her choice to be his queen or vassal, but that the fates had decreed, irrevocably decreed, she should be either the one or the other in a few hours.

Elfrida was ready to expire with terror and consternation; her father, mother, Wilmot, rushed upon her thoughts; what would they not suffer for her sufferings; her husband, she recollected with a sigh, as the indirect author of her misfortunes, and was wholly at a loss how to conduct herself.

Sometimes she had it in actual contemplation to throw herself into the sea, and then condemned herself with the utmost severity for despairing of the protection of Heaven; and whilst all these melancholy things were passing over her mind, Lord S—— was confidently gazing upon her, and congratulating himself upon his address, in outwitting the goddess of wisdom in an human
man

man shape, and deceiving the first-born daughter of caution.

Mrs. Ellifon, at length, convinced that her only chance for escaping this deep-laid and most infernal design, was to temporize to the best of her power, besought the Gentleman, therefore, to spare her before so many witnesses, and, by his generosity in complying with this request, make an interest in her gratitude for himself, when she had an opportunity of shewing it. "We shall not, I suppose, Sir", said she, "continue long at sea, and the people who are now about us, will not be our companions on shore; let me then owe you the obligation of not betraying your success to the world."

This his Lordship could not but confess was very reasonable, besides appearing a happy presage of future indulgence. "Come, then," said he, "Madam, sing me some of the songs, for the execution of which you are so celebrated, by way of compromise, and charm me into an happy acquiescence with your humor."

"The dying swan," said Mrs. Ellifon's heart, "sings, we are assured, its own requiem; and only let death step in between me and violation, I fear it is all I must ask of Heaven."

She sung her best, whilst she was straining her eyes in search of some friendly shore, and Hannah, seeing them engaged, began

to tamper with the man at the helm for her mistress' deliverance.

"It is a folly to talk," said Hannah, "but, over and above the difference between doing a good and a bad action, this man will never give you half as much as Captain Overbury would do for saving his child; add to which, that my Lady (poor Jenkins thought it would have an useful effect to talk grand) has a school-fellow gone to the East-Indies, that will return with the next fleet as rich as a Jew, and as free to part with his money as a Lord; and, it is not to say hundreds, for he would give thousands of pounds, rather than Mrs. Ellifon should be misused."

"And what is this man's name," said the Pilot.

"Why, Mr. Wilmot," said Hannah, "the most handsomest, the most sweetest, and the most—"

"Well, well, young woman," said the three sailors in a breath, "you may hold your jaw, and set your heart at rest; for, do you hear me," continued the Pilot, "don't betray yourself, but, since Mr. Wilmot's your man, all is safe as you could wish; for I came home in the same ship with him from India, and he has been kind to my family, and to my three messmates, since I became a man of war's man, for we all belong to a ship in dock, and so got leave to
come

come out in this hired boat; so mark me, silence is the word, this fine spark shall not hurt a hair of your mistress' head, though it is plain enough he means her no good; a sloop of war is expected down this tide from off Deal, she cannot be far distant, and the wind is sunk, and what there is is against us, and for them, and we will bear forward, or stand in to take her as she passes, as appears best for our purpose; and now mum, and be mute as a mackèrel."

Hannah would have given the world to communicate the smallest hint of this good news to her mistress, but it was impossible; in this state of anxious hope on the part of Hannah, and deep despair on Elfrida's, did they continue for too long hours, during which time she often resolved to fall at her betrayer's feet and beg for mercy, but could not hope for success, when she suddenly perceived a ship sailing toward them, and, from surprize and joy, insensible of the distance, she eagerly held out both her hands, in a petitioning attitude, and fainted away.

The Pilot took advantage of the little bustle which this incident occasioned, and gave a signal to the Boatswain of the sloop, who happened to be his particular acquaintance, to put off the boat and come up to him.

"Here's villainy on foot," said the Pilot,
"and the Lady who is fainting in that man's
arms,

arms, is a *near relation* of Mr. Wilmot's, "tip us a quid," said he aloud, "what does the fellow stay for," then lowering his voice, he continued, "here is foul play, I tell you, so make us friends on board, and bear down upon us; I have slackened our sails, when we had a little wind, that we might get alongside you."

Away went the Boatswain.

Mrs. Ellifson opened her eyes, and seeing the ship much nearer, again made an effort to speak, held out her hands, and a second time fainted.

Captain Venables, the Commander of the sloop, was a man of honor, courage, and humanity, he did not wait to hear the sailor out, but flying upon deck, he instantly knew his Lordship, through all his disguise, and invited him and his company on board, that the sick Lady might be taken care of.

His Lordship hesitated, then refused this polite offer; but the Captain declared he should not proceed till the Lady recovered; and his Lordship found himself reduced to the disagreeable necessity of either complying, or owning he was upon illicit business; but, recollecting that as soon as Mrs. Ellifson could utter a word she would discover all, he insisted upon pushing forward.

"That I forbid," said the Captain, "for
I have

I have a strange fancy to speak to that Lady."

"You are impertinent, Sir," said Lord S——, "and shall answer this."

"When and where you please, my Lord," said the Captain, "but the Lady, I am determined, shall be my prisoner, until she informs me upon what ground she will be set at liberty;" and the Boatswain having contrived to throw a rope, with a hook, astern of them, they were soon hauled in alongside the sloop, and Mrs. Ellison conveyed on board, followed by Hannah.

"She is dead," said Hannah, and indeed appearances justified her assertion, "and my poor mistress is killed by her fright, and that man and woman are the cause of all. O, Sir, she was the sweetest, best of women."

"I must entreat the favor of your Lordship's company," said Captain Venables, "and your's, Madam," to Mrs. Felton, "until this dark business is cleared up." So saying, he left his men to execute his orders, and carried Elfrida into the cabin, to his own bed, calling the Surgeon to bleed her.

It was some time, nevertheless, before she came to herself, and she was overjoyed to find Hannah seated by her, and to hear a voice, almost similar to Wilmot's, assure her she was in safe and honorable hands.

As

As she grew better she ventured to look around her, but Captain Venables, fearful she should relapse at the sight of Lord S—, asked gently if she could bear the rencounter.

“Lord S—,” said Mrs. Ellifon, “where is he? How came I in the same ship with him? I will not be shocked at seeing him, though he did plunder Mr. Ellifon of his fortune, and insult him with a base proposal.”

Captain Venables moving from before Lord S—, where he had purposely placed himself, to hide him from Mrs. Ellifon, she exclaimed, “He here! Ah, Sir, am I not still a betrayed and undone woman?”

“I command this ship, Madam,” said Mr. Venables, “and Lord S—, upon your account, is at present my prisoner.”

“Blessed Heaven,” said Elfrida, “what a deliverance! he would have bought me of my husband, by the restoration of all his winnings, and, being scorned, as he ought, has formed this wicked assault upon my person, the person, Sir, of another man’s wife, treacherously trepanned by him—”

“Pardon me, Madam,” said Captain Venables, “his outrage is not, altogether, so great as you imagine; for, Lady, let it not wound you too deeply, this unfortunate husband is no more.”

“Mr.

“ Mr. Ellifon dead ! how, Sir, could you know this circumstance ? ”

“ He entered himself, Madam, a volunteer in America ; I have spent several evenings with him, have often drank your health, and heard from him the most honorable mention of you. It was his destiny, however, to be sent out upon a reconnoitering party, when some Indians surprized them, and they died to a man.”

Mrs. Ellifon was astonished, her tenderness, indeed, was unwounded, though her humanity felt for him.

“ Mercy upon us,” said Hannah, “ how thankful I am he did not appear to me. I wonder—I wonder if—if—” but recollecting herself, she withdrew from the side of her mistress, and, hurrying into a private corner of the cabin, knelt down to pray for poor dear Mr. Wilmot’s safety.

“ My father and mother,” said Mrs. Ellifon, “ what will be their apprehensions, when they find we do not return ! ”

“ We shall reach Spithead to-night,” said the Captain, “ though the wind does not quite favor us, and if it is too late for you to go on shore, some of my men shall set off and let them know you are safe ; but suffer me, Madam,” said the kind and considerate Captain, “ to prevail upon you to take some repose ; and what can I offer you by way of refreshment ? ”

“ A glass

“ A glass of water,” said Mrs. Ellifson, “ will be a cordial to me.”

The Captain ordered it to be brought, and presented it to her ; And now, my dear Lady,” said he, “ you shall be left to your self, or at least with only your own servant ; and, if you will give leave, Lord S—— may pursue his voyage.”

“ Any thing, every thing,” said Elfrida, “ I consent to, that will remove me to a distance from him ; for, deliverer as you have been to me, I cannot feel myself safe until he and his wicked agent are on shore.”

“ The Lady,” said Captain Venables, “ I most heartily beg her pardon ; for, upon my honor, she has been treated with very little ceremony ; but she may be thankful she escapes a ducking, which my brave fellows, if they knew her merits, would think her intitled to ; so that, my Lord, I dare believe she will be happy to accompany you.”

The Captain conducted his Lordship upon deck, but the Pilot and his partners refusing to do any more dirty work, the Captain was obliged to give them their passage to the head, but set them on shore without fear or dismay, at Cumberland-fort, the first land they could come at, wholly unmindful of any difficulties they might meet with in accommodating themselves with a carriage.

A LET-

A LETTER.

There is somewhat so touching in the distress of a young, beautiful, and virtuous woman, that the man who has the happiness to rescue her from danger, is very apt to lose his heart for his pains ; this is the fact, and when it is remembered that eventful writers generally draw tender incidents from bold adventures, our readers will not, perhaps, be surprized to hear that Captain Venables fell in love with our heroine ; but it must not be concealed that he was soon sensible of a double impediment to his winding up the history of his knight-errantry, with becoming an enamorado ; no less, in the first place, than the prior engagement of the Lady's affections to the absent Wilmot, a secret Hannah could not forbear letting out ; and, in the second, that he happened to be engaged himself to a very worthy woman, who was already making the necessary preparations for meeting him at the altar ; circumstances which are by no means an advantage to this work ; but, as to have written up to the rules of romance, would have been to violate truth, we hope our readers will accept of that plain apology, and be satisfied with our pursuing our humble narrative.

It

It was one o'clock before the two men, who undertook to deliver a message from Elfrida to her father and mother, reached Portsmouth.

Captain and Mrs. Overbury were, nevertheless up, and waiting, with heart-felt anxiety, for news of their Elfrida.

The Sailors told them, without further ceremony, she was now safe, but that there had like to have been deadly bad work; and, though cautioned not to alarm the family, the Captain picked sufficient out of them to know Mrs. Felton was a monster, and his child the intended victim of her wicked artifice.

They slept not, so impatient were they for the particulars of this black transaction, and the morning not only restored their Elfrida to their arms, but gave a new friend to their hearts in the person of Captain Venables, who bespoke their acquaintance for his bride elect, assuring them it would be a great pleasure to him, to be permitted to introduce her to so respectable a family.

Ellison's death was then mentioned, with every circumstance within the scope of his information, and Captain Overbury remarked, how wonderfully Providence had brought that event to their knowledge, which, from distance of situation, might have remained undiscovered, or, at least, unascertained, to the end of their lives.

Mr.

Mr. Venables professed his surprize, that no accounts had reached them, for the commanding officer of the corps to which Mr. Ellifon belonged, had declared an intention to write to his friends, and thought he had seen his name in the returns of the killed.

Hannah spread out her sea adventures wherever she came, and did not spare either his Lordship, or his Lordship's agent; when she soon learned that the woman's character for such diabolical undertakings was notorious, and Lord S——— universally known for a man of deep enterprize and intrigue.

"Is it not cruel as well as unjust," said Mrs. Overbury, "for the persons who could give you this intelligence, to have suffered an innocent family to be the dupes of such villainy; I, for my part, in a similar case, would, at all hazards, convey a hint of a similar danger, and leave the individuals, so warned, to the exercise of, at least, their own judgment, and the regulation of their own choice; they are barbarous ties that can restrain us from doing this office by each other."

Hannah, the moment she had Mrs. Overbury alone, talked of nothing but Mr. Wilmot. "As for me," said she, "who have not learned your nice and odd notions, I should rejoice in my release from a bad

bad husband, and hold myself ready to accept of a good one. I am sure I have been down on my knees more than once to thank Heaven for having Ellifon to itself; though once, indeed, I was terribly frightened, for the cat was in the room, and jumped up, and I thought it was him, himself, that touched my elbow, and fell upon my face and shrieked out; nor have I, I will own to you, Madam, knelt, in your formal kind of praying since; but my heart is busy, and my spirits all in alarm; and I would be glad to know what chance poor dear Mr. Wilmot would have, if he was to come back safe from amongst the Blacks; that is, what chance you think he would have?"

"My good woman," said Mrs. Overbury, "your friendship for Wilmot is an excuse for all the mistakes you commit; my Elfrida is above either disguise or affectation, but there is a decorum due to her character, and all those who love her must respect, and not wound her feelings."

"I wound her!" said Hannah, "I am sure I would sooner cut off a piece of my tongue; but yet nature is nature, that's all I argue for; and, as she loved Mr. Wilmot, and told him so twenty times in Arcadia, when she was too young to know-right from wrong; and he has ever loved her with such—but you shall judge, Madam, how he loves her, for when he was going abroad
the

the first time, and I stole to take leave of him, seeing him half dead with sorrow, (you must not be angry, Madam, for I was not married to Ellifon) but, to comfort him, I bid him remember, that many a one had had, for their second husband, him they could not get for their first, and that no one *knowned* what might happen; and you shall hear his reply (Mrs. Ellifon herself, with all her rigidness, could have said no more) "I must not hear you talk thus, Mrs. Jenkins," said he, "whilst Miss Overbury could be our subject, my heart would, with rapture, have listened to you, but Mrs. Ellifon's character is too sacred to be lightly mentioned, and you must never let me hear you name her thus; and now, Madam, come, with all your *dickorums*, does not such a man deserve to be happy?"

"Do not let us talk about it, Hannah, time will tell truths which prudence and principle must conceal; and be careful not to distress our Elfrida."

"A fiddlestick of distress," said Hannah, having turned into another room, "I say distress, indeed, to be beloved by one of the most handsomest, and the most worthiest men in the world; for my part, I think your fine-lady whims are the next thing to lunacy; for, love is love, if you will give it fair play, in the heart of both high and low,
and

and a bad husband a curse, and a good husband a blessing, all the world over."

Captain Venables departed, quite charmed with the whole family ; when Mr. Overbury, with a countenance that spoke his honest feelings, said, " What a chequered life is ours ; Elfrida, my dear, you would anticipate poverty, but I now begin to apprehend, we shall, in reality, make acquaintance with it ; my half-pay is lost to us, yet, as I must conceive, we owe my Captain's commission to Lord S——, we must not eat the bread of infamy.

" O fear us not," said both Ladies, in the same instant, " throw him back his insulting gifts, and the joys of peace, and of industry shall be ours."

Accordingly, the next day, Mr. Overbury, enclosed it to the Secretary, with his reasons of conduct ; and, with the utmost alacrity, set about preparing for quitting Portsmouth ; but, to his agreeable surprize, the third day from dispatching this important packet, he had it returned, with many compliments, from the noble State-officer, with assurances that it was procured for him, and not without some expence, as well as a good deal of trouble, by a young Gentleman, of the name of Wilmot, then in the East Indies.

Made happy in this particular, Hannah began, once more to hold up her head, for
never

never was despondence greater than her's, upon the melancholy prospect of Captain Overbury's falling into poverty ; but, though ready to burst, she kept her mouth, as it were with a bridle, until Mrs. Ellison laid aside her first mourning ; when, having assisted her in dressing, the second day of wearing a grey gown, " I wonder, Madam," said she, " where poor dear Mr. Wilmot is now ! "

Mrs. Ellison blushed, and Hannah cried, " Ah, now you look like yourself ; how sweetly that color becomes you ; I wish—I wish—"

" My dear Hannah," said Elfrida, " do not begin to talk wild things ; Mr. Wilmot was the friend of my infancy, and the brother of my youth ; but having been once a wife—"

" What of that ? " said Hannah, " Mercy upon us, what a world would you make of it ! Is not a marriage at an end when death steps in to part man and wife ? and are they not at liberty to choose a second time ? "

" Such are the customs of the world," said Mrs. Ellison, " nor do I condemn those who give into them, but I have a rule of conduct, Hannah."

" Well, Madam," said Hannah, " I do believe you will drive me beside myself ; the deuce take all fine notions, say I ; a grain of common-sense is worth a thousand of it ; and so Mr. Wilmot, who had like to have lost his

his life, when you became Mr. Ellifon's wife, must be let to break his heart now you are become a widow. All the whole earth, Madam, shall not persuade me this is good logic; no, it is absolutely sinful; it is as if one was wiser than Providence itself, and was to say, in defiance, Aye, aye, let Heaven decree what it may, I will not yield myself to its will."

Hannah was flouncing, and tossing the things about, all the time she spoke, and Mrs. Ellifon was compelled to smile, "Compose yourself, I beseech you," said she, "we may never see Mr. Wilmot more, or if we should, he may—"

"I cannot bear, Madam," said Hannah, "and so there is an end of the matter, I cannot bear to hear you, who are all goodness and truth, should talk at this rate; for, whatever flesh and blood *you* are made of, Mr. Wilmot, except being better born, is such another as myself, and will stare and will die with vexation, if you talk to him thus."

"No, no, Hannah, Mr. Wilmot will understand me, though you cannot; the principles by which I govern myself are neither so new, or so extraordinary, as you may imagine."

"So you may think," said Hannah, "but I would venture to be put to death, and I am not very desirous of seeing such a tragedy

gedy acted, if Mr. Wilmot is not of my opinion."

A letter was received by Mr. Overbury from Lord S——, full of professions of contrition for his conduct, and assurances of high respect, and veneration for his lovely daughter, concluding with an offer of his hand and fortune, which he would have tendered sooner, but from ideas that must be commendatory of him, as they were something similar to their own very peculiar observance of propriety; but that he must conceive a Lady, who had been a widow two years and a half, might, without offence, be solicited to turn her thoughts to a second union.

Hannah wished herself in a situation for tearing his eyes out; an impudent, trapaning, wicked Lord, she called him, to suppose her mistress, that would not hear the name of poor dear Mr. Wilmot mentioned, as her lover, would give into so monstrous a proposal, as listening to the man who had robbed, and almost murdered her husband, frightened her to death, and intended to have made her his concubine.

The whole family were much entertained by Hannah's honest resentment of this indignity.

"And so," said the Captain, "Mrs. Jenkins, you really would not like to be her Ladyship's waiting-woman?"

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E

"I would

“ I would starve in a ditch first, like Jane Shore. No, no, such honors as he could give, every good mind must scorn ; I wish I could get at him to tell him his own.”

“ And yet,” continued the Captain, archly, “ a coach and six, with the title of Countess, is a very pretty thing, Hannah.”

“ Oh, Sir,” said Hannah, with a face as red as crimson, “ do not tempt me, do not try me so hard, lest I should let out somewhat against ambition, and the vanity of wealth, which you could never pardon ; Mr. Wilmot is my man, and I will stand by him to my last moment.”

The Captain laughed and commended her goodness of heart. “ I,” said he, “ despise this Lord as much as you do ; and, well as I love my Elfrida, would much rather follow her to her grave, than behold her his wife.

Hannah stared, paused, and stared again. “ See her buried first !” said she, “ I fear that is going beyond my mark ; my mind would surely give way ; but then I should wish it were lawful, in a Christian country, like the heathen queen, I saw last summer in the play, to get him killed as soon as the marriage-service was finished ; and it would be no more than his deserts ; and, though all the world was to call it *unhuman*, I should rejoice to see him bleed.”

The

The Captain, it was plain, did not greatly condemn her notions, and wrote to Lord S——, in such terms as convinced him, it would be to no purpose to renew his application.

“We are, my Lord,” said he, “much more astonished, to find ourselves addressed upon such a subject as a marriage-treaty, by a person who has injured and grossly insulted us, than flattered by Lord S——’s superiority and condescension. Elfrida Ellifon, Sir, was always in love with poverty and pastoral life; the man of her choice must be simple in his manners, and tremblingly alive to every finer sentiment of honor and humanity. You, my Lord, are a man of the great world, and the elements might as easily be reconciled as our minds and your’s.

“We decline, therefore, with perhaps too little gratitude, the favors you would confer upon us, and with all *due* remembrance of the *past*, remain, as we *ought*,

Yours, &c. &c.”

Lord S—— was piqued as much as his love was disappointed; he vowed revenge, and made several mean attempts to deprive Mr. Overbury of his commission; but, for the honor of the British Ministry, the Secretary was firm in his approbation of the Captain, and deaf to every malicious at-

tack his enemies contrived to make upon his character.

Captain Venables brought his Lady down to Portsmouth, who was a very agreeable woman, and so much in the stile of Elfrida, that the whole family were enlivened by her company and conversation; she was, indeed, the first woman Elfrida ever formed an intimacy with; for the Ladies she had been introduced to in London, were too well-bred to be rational; too deeply engaged in the polite *routine*, to have any acquaintance with sentiment, and too lively to be capable of reflection; whereas, Mrs. Venables, like herself, before her heart had painful weights upon it, was,

*An equal mixture of good humor,
And sensible soft melancholy.*

These were, indeed, some of the happiest days Elfrida had enjoyed, since the breaking up of her infant pleasures.

Captain Venables, who was a man of fortune, and had received a very handsome sum with his wife, had a job-coach, in which the Ladies took their daily airings, Elfrida, Mrs. Venables, Mrs. Overbury, and the little Ella, escorted by the Captains Overbury and Venables; and, though Ella grew up rather plain, she was a very amiable child,

child, and promised to make a valuable woman.

But all this time Hannah was upon tenter, and went about, enquiring of every one, how a letter could be sent to meet a Gentleman coming from the East-Indies.

She was at length told, that the only method was, to direct it to be left for him at St. Helena, to be sent back, if the India-man, on board of which he was, did not happen to touch there.

Hannah was in extacies, and thus poured her heart out upon paper, to her beloved Mr. Wilmot.

“ Alack-a-day, Sir, there was a time when a letter from your old friend Hannah Jenkins, would have done your heart good; and so let it now, for the sake of its happy contents.

“ For that cruel and ill-natured man, Mr. Ellifon, is dead and gone; and the best of women, as I once told you, may still be yours, if you manage yourself right; but you will have a deadly deal of ground to go over; for what with their *delikisses* and their sentiments, I dare not put in a word, not so much as edge-ways, in your favor, though Mrs. Ellifon blushed once when I mentioned your name at an unawares, not one of your angry and haughty blushes, but such as I have seen overspread her face in Arcadia, after you came from London, and she had

found out, poor thing, that all her fine gratitude and innocent doating upon you, was likely to end in downright love.

“ Well, let it be a caution say I, how those people that can take pleasure in making themselves miserable, let love steal upon their hearts; for why? there is no way of escaping, when once they come to see their danger, than by shunning the acquaintance of each other, and not to keep sighing and be-pitying themselves in private, and nursing their disorder, by meeting in public, until they are almost finished; and so Mr. Wilmot, as I was saying, let those who wish not to be taken in, get as soon and as far distant as they can from the *infektion*—but to come to the point.

“ Don’t you, Sir, go about to despair, because you may find some difficulty in your first setting off as a lover; such as being talked down by high-flown professions of friendship, and the like of that, but go on gently and kindly, until some look or word encourages you to be bolder; for if she is woman, she cannot withstand you.

“ But her’s, Mr. Wilmot, is not the sort of heart to be won slap-dash, as a body may say, but must be melted into love. I have not lived so long in the world for nothing; but, though I should, perhaps, be at a loss myself how to go about things, I know how other people should work their way;

way; and beware how you disdain my advice, from thinking yourself more *wiser*, because you have been twice backwards and forwards to the East-Indies; but what of that? for if we *was* to *argue* the matter, you would be convinced that a man might look up at the sky till he could call every star by its name, and into the deep till he knew all the fish that swims, without gaining one bit of knowledge of the ways of mankind, or of womankind, which is only to be learned by living plump amongst them.

“And, after all, Mr. Wilmot, what has your life been, but a scene of innocence and ignorance, as one may say; for, with all your Latin, and all your travelling, are you master of a single trick, out of the ten thousand Mr. Ellison could shew you, all *hocus-pocus*, and neat as conjuration and old Scratch could make them; not you, by my truly, but would be just as far to seek as when I caught you and your Elfrida in my arms, in the sea-side, by our cottage.

“But what of all this? you will, I doubt not, ask, and what is the woman driving at? why, hear me, Mr. Wilmot, I would not, for the globe, have you a deceiver; but I would have you bend your heart to my dear Lady’s whims, till such time as you can persuade her to live without them; and, as Mr. Ellison did, for wicked purposes, so far get the better of yourself, in the cause of honest

tenderness, and the like of they, as to hide the lover behind the friend, and not when you are spreading the net to catch her affections, be so foolish as to let her perceive it, till she is fairly *tangled*, for my head is turned with hearing her talk.

“As for losing her to another, never fear that; not but a Lord would have had her; an impudent villain, for now it is out I must tell you how he served us; but when you come back you must not set up for a fighter, for that would make Mrs. Ellifon hate you, and shun you, instead of—but you may guess what I could say.”

Having told Mr. Wilmot their expedition, she goes on thus:

“And what miracle, do you think, saved us at last? why, as sure as you are alive, Mr. Wilmot (that is if you are alive) nothing in the whole world but my telling your name to the man who steered our great boat; and so my Lord and his wicked partner were thrown out, for we were taken on board a sloop of war, Captain Venables, Commander, and such a Commander, so handsome, and so good, and so gentle, and so like you, Mr. Wilmot; and then his attention to Mrs. Ellifon, and such caressing of me, for her sake, that I began to think it would be the second part to the same tune; but it ended in Captain Venables only falling in love with your Elfrida; but what of that? I could
not

not forbear frightening you a little; for so it proved, that he was all the time engaged, and has since married a very agreeable Lady, who visits us, and makes us happy as we can be in your *absence*.

“ But, though it was your name that was the great means of saving us, it was I, myself I, from the lessons I had learned of that *quack-doctor* Ellison, that might be said to do the business, for, finding how matters went, by this Lord almost devouring *your* (yes, she shall yet be *your*) Elfrida’s hands, what did I? I wish you could have seen me, but put on the downright hypocrite, and seemed glad she had got a lover, when I could have stabbed him to the heart, if I had had a sword; a lover, by my truly, for such a woman as Mrs. Ellison, who, I then believed was a lawful and fettered wife, to be made his Babylonian mistress, who would not have stabbed him? and so, as I have already told you, we all got safe on board.

“ But the best of it is, that Madam Jezabel, my Lord’s friend, as he called her, drew me into the party, to forward the business, supposing me a mere ninny, and that it would have a better air, to Captain and Mrs. Overbury, than to ask Mrs. Ellison to go alone; when, behold, if Mrs. Ellison had gone without me, she would either have died with fright or hard usage, or lived

what this vilest of men had pleased to make her.

“ But he has been refused, I tell you, both him and his honorable offer despised, and Mr. Overbury was about to throw up his commission, supposing it came from him, but, finding where the obligation lay (ah! if ever goodness was upon earth, in an human shape, I think those who know you need not go far to seek it) he now enjoys it, and calls you his own boy, when Mrs. Ellison is not present, for they are all alike, and *feel* so nicely, as they call it, for one another, that what is thought wrong for one to hear, is judged unfit for that to speak, except in private, but your safe return will bring them all to their senses, and so prays your poor

“ Hannah Jenkins.

“ But hold, I must not conclude without sending my best love to little Frederic, and telling you how fine a girl Ella grows, who is taught to call the Captain and his wife father and mother, and such, in good truth, they have been to her, and Mrs. Ellison sister; and she is so good, and takes her learning so well, and remembers you with such gratitude that she deserves it all; and so no more at present, only wishing you a speedy and a *happy* return, (you understand me) I remain your's to command till death, &c. &c.

A DIS-

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

But, most unluckily, after all Hannah's care and toil, Wilmot never got the letter, for the ship it was sent by foundered in its passage.

Hannah told the days first, and next the hours, when the fleet was expected, and, promising a sailor an handsome reward if he would let her know of its arrival, or any single ship from India, she ensured his diligence and punctuality.

But as cross accidents were no unfrequent things at Mr. Overbury's house, when the fellow, breathless with expedition, came to tell her that several ships had been seen off the Scilly Islands, and were on their way to Portsmouth, who should he meet with, instead of his employer, but the Captain, who received his news with pleasure, and with pleasure fulfilled Hannah's pecuniary engagement, and not doubting but it was her intention to run to the world's end, to welcome her favorite, resolved to keep watch and ward to give himself the chance of a first interview with him, that the great change in his daughter's life, might less suddenly unfold itself upon his knowledge, than by her wild and extravagant report.

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In a word, Captain Overbury wished Mr. Wilmot to solicit his Elfrida's hand, but wished his solicitation the dictates of his own heart, not the impulse of any generous sentiments, Hannah's strange mode of stating facts might awaken in his breast.

The Captain finding, upon enquiry, that if Wilmot was alive, and a passenger in the then approaching fleet, he would soon arrive, was attentive to every footstep, and, under pretence of fearing some repeated outrage from Lord S—, gave orders that no one should open the door, after the evening set in, but himself.

The period of expectation always appears tedious; no letters, no Wilmot—the Captain was terrified.—“Can he be dead? said he, “forbid it Heaven; he is the son of my dearest hopes, and, I trust, he will not be, a second time, the son of my regret.” The reader may therefore judge, from this state of anxiety, with what joy, as they were sitting chatting over their unremoved tea-table, he saw him pass by the window, with the little Frederic in his hand.

A letter from Mr. Overbury, which had reached Wilmot at Bengal, had told him the story of their change of situation, and he had, accordingly, come strait from Spithead to their door, which Mr. Overbury opening, before he could rap, caught him in his arms, saying “This, this is happiness; to behold you
thus

thus safe returned, my Wilmot, is happiness unspeakable; but, having taken care, by dint of stratagem, to be the first to embrace you, we will surprize the Ladies as little as possible."

Frederic flew to Mrs Overbury and kissed her twenty times, whilst Elfrida shook hands with Wilmot, and congratulated him, with unusual ease, upon his return.

The boy then snatched a kiss, *en passant*, from his sister, and threw his arms round Mrs. Ellison's neck, who was much pleased with his affectionate attention to her; Mrs. Overbury called the moment a blessed one, that restored her to the friend of her heart; and Mrs. Jenkins, hearing a great bustle, suspected the cause, soon entered the parlor, with a Pray, Sir, to Mr. Overbury, did you not call? and partook of the general satisfaction.

The Captain, however, apprehensive lest Hannah's delight should break forth into indiscreet observations, called her aside, and desiring her to provide a little smart supper for her old acquaintance, kept her in full employment, for she had to market as well as to dress what she purchased, so that all was secure in that quarter.

Wilmot, who conceived Elfrida was the same sacred character he had left her, was glad to find that time and resolution enabled him to behold her with less discomposure than
than

than formerly; but, to his great surprize, she introduced a retrospect of their infant intercourse, stiled him her brother and her friend, and concluded many little recollected particulars, with "You must recollect, Sir, when—"

Wilmot, not knowing the question she might call, and, dreading lest it should deprive him of his unaccustomed firmness, turned abruptly from her to Mrs. Overbury and said, "Have you, my dear Madam, heard from America?"

"Yes," replied the Captain, "about ten months ago, for the last time."

"How, Sir!" the last time," said Wilmot?"

"For the last time," repeated Mr. Overbury, "for our son Ellison is now no more."

They were sitting by fire-light, the Captain having purposely forbid candles to be brought in till supper.

Wilmot took Mrs. Overbury's hand, she perceived he was cold as death and trembled, she therefore desired Elfrida to make Hannah a visit, and see how the supper went on; for, my dear, said she, we shall be the sufferers for whatever mistakes her honest raptures may occasion her to commit; the children will attend you.

They both hung about her with tenderness, and Mrs. Ellison withdrew with them, though

though not without a secret presentiment of her mother's motive of conduct.

"You are ill, my beloved Wilmot," said Mrs. Overbury.

"I was almost deprived of my senses," said Wilmot, "but I am now better; it was the last intelligence I could have expected to receive."

The Captain brought him a glass of cordial, in which Wilmot drank Elfrida's health; and "O tell me," said he, "for this night shall decide my destiny, have I your friendship, Sir? your affection, Madam, as heretofore? and may I hope, if your Elfrida should prove propitious, you will accept me for your son?"

"With the warmest approbation," said the Captain, "and you know you are sure of my wife; but let not Elfrida discover the good understanding between us, it will be time enough for us to appear in the business, when we are applied to, and her consent authorizes us to declare our previous election."

A young girl was now sent in by Mrs. Ellison to lay the cloth, she had avoided Hannah to the last possible moment, for fear she should say strange things to her; but Hannah was profoundly silent, though on the tip-toe of delight, and only by nods and winks conveyed her feelings.

Supper

Supper and Mrs. Ellison entered together, and now Wilmot indulged himself with occasional views of a face he so much loved, and had the pleasure to observe, that the lines of distress which had cut him to the heart, before he went to India, were softened into lines of tranquillity.

"You ask me not, Madam," said he to Elfrida, "how I have improved the venture with which you honored me."

"Elfrida," said the Captain, smiling, "this is a private trust, I perceive, which this Gentleman has so little gallantry as to mention in full assembly."

Mrs. Ellison related the means by which she obtained the sum of money thus employed, as also the ninety pounds she had reserved for family exigencies. "What succeeded this step, speaks itself, and I shall only add," said she, "that I never yet, in a single instance, was deceived in my good opinion of Mr. Wilmot."

Wilmot looked around him with an air of self-satisfaction, which seemed to call upon his friends to enjoy the compliment that gave it birth.

"Come," said the Captain, "let us hear, Wilmot, how you have acquitted yourself."

"This evening," replied Wilmot, "I am a happy visitor only, to-morrow if you please, shall be devoted to business."

He

He extolled Frederic's good behavior, and affirmed, that if he continued throughout life as he had begun, he would make a shining figure, and Elfrida spoke as highly of Ella; "She has both a docility and a gratitude in her nature," said she, "that bids fair for rendering her a very amiable woman."

This was so happy an evening, that no one seemed to remember the necessity of its termination; and Hannah was so clever, as to find out where they had sent to engage lodgings, by a question or two she put to Frederic, in the short time he was in the kitchen with Elfrida, and she went to bed with the resolution of paying them an early visit in the morning.

The morning came, and away she posted to enquire if her letter had been received, and of fifty other, to her most interesting matters.

"You do not seem half so much rejoiced," said she, "as I expected, to hear of Ellison's death; surely, surely, Mr. Wilmot, though you are a man, you can never be so *unconstant* in your nature, as to love my young mistress less because all impediments are removed."

"I fear, Mrs. Jenkins," said Wilmot, "Mrs. Ellison, though set at liberty, by the death of her husband, will not be so easily won as you may imagine."

"I imagine!"

"I imagine!" said Hannah, "believe me, I imagine nothing, but fine quality foolery between you, instead of saying to each other, which I nevertheless believe to be the case, my love is as great as ever, and so let us marry and live happily."

"Ah, if it only rested with me," said Wilmot.

"Who does it rest with?" said Hannah, "Do you expect your Elfrida to court you, as she did in Arcadia, when she thought there was nothing beyond speaking the truth, and having a good conscience? I have no patience with you; but, since I see you so backward, this is the last trouble I will give myself in the affair."

"My dear Mrs. Jenkins," said Wilmot, "can you be serious? Dare even you, yourself, touch upon this point to Elfrida? for, does she not awe us all into silence?"

"I tell you what, Mr. Wilmot," said Hannah, "too much sense is quite as great a misfortune as too little; for, as the fool cannot discern what is good for him, so your wise people overlook it, and are always forward to shake hands with unnecessary disappointment."

Mr. Wilmot gave Hannah six silk handkerchiefs, two gowns, and a pound of tea, and she left him, at length, with tears in her eyes; "For, in short," said she, "I am afraid you are too worthy to be happy, for there

there must be something wrong in every body's life, and, as you have no faults, you must, I suspect, have misfortunes."

Wilmot was at Captain Overbury's to breakfast, and was soon followed by a cargo of boxes, filled with Eastern productions.

"If you make many voyages," said Elfrida, "and remember us as you have now done, you will give our habitation the appearance of an Indian palace."

Wilmot looked earnestly at her for a moment, in silence. "There is but one event," said he, "that can occasion me another voyage, but that would be a decisive one, for I would never see England more."

Mrs. Ellifon's heart was not unconscious of his meaning; she wished to come to an explanation with him, and set her sentiments before him, that her words and manners might be wholly unfettered; she had, therefore, received him with the chearful warmth of friendship, which, she conceived, would testify for her, that she had no expectation of his addressing her as a lover, and hoped to find him uninfluenced by every such motive of conduct towards her.

"I believe, Wilmot," said she, "I must take upon me to regulate your Arcadian notions; I fancy you have not, altogether, outlived the prejudices you there imbibed; the pleasures of our infancy, I grant you, were abundant, but can never be renovated, and

we

we must adopt such as are suited to the maturity we have attained, the vicissitudes I have known, and my present—”

“If, Elfrida,” said Wilmot, “you can change the texture of my soul, you may make something of me, but whilst I possess this consciousness, which recalls the past, is touched by the present, and interested by the future, I must aspire to the honor and happiness of calling you mine.”

“Wilmot,” said Mrs. Ellison, “sit down, and let me discuss the point with you. That you was the first object of my affectionate attachment, I neither can, nor wish to deny; you, nevertheless, like my dear father and mother, I must apprehend, misconstrued my disinclination to become Mr. Ellison’s wife, for, besides objections founded in girlish error, it was the breaking up of our innocent affections, that wounded me deepest.”

“Had Mr. Ellison died before I was his, you shall judge of my sincerity by my ingenuousness, I believe I should with the approbation of my relations, have readily consented to unite my fate with yours; but my mind has, since that time, been greatly deranged; the sorrows of a distressed wife, the serious character of a widow; and, of second marriages, I cannot approve.

“That my heart was not yours, in the way you imagined, is evident, by the certainty, that had any other man been proposed,

posed, except Mr. Ellifson, as my father and mother's choice, I should, with little or no reluctance, have married him; any *other* man, Sir, in the meridian height of my friendship for you, who had not appeared to me in the formidable light of your enemy."

"My lovely, and ever-beloved Elfrida," said Wilmot, "can idle opinions influence a woman of your sound understanding? were your affections unattainable, without wounding your peace, I would be beforehand with your request to desist my importunity; but, pardon me, if I presume to say, while I can entertain a hope, that except your change of name, our friendship would be unchanged, by permitting me publicly to live for you, to live to promote your felicity upon every possible occasion, and enjoy the sunshine of your approbation, the incentive, as well as the reward, of all my cares; I can never cease importuning you until you prove propitious; and O, my dearest Madam, if you would not have me believe all you have professed for me an illusion, if you would not plunge me a second time into despair, unless you can affirm you have an unconquerable repugnance to blessing me with your hand, indeed, indeed, Elfrida, you must not refuse me; your father and mother are already won to my interest, and not only *call* me, but have the goodness to acknowledge, they shall rejoice to

to *receive* me for their son; disappoint not then their high-raised hopes of happiness, from seeing us united; but consent with that grace which marks all your actions.— Speak, my Elfrida, speak, for you are the arbitress of my destiny.”

A N E N Q U I R Y.

Elfrida complained of Wilmot's importunity. “It is so long,” said she, “since we were together, that some time, at least, must be granted, for the proper gradations of the particular intimacy you solicit; it is impossible to have so elastic a turn of mind, as to lose and receive impressions with such rapidity; for, though I will not say I lament Mr. Ellison's death, I can, with truth affirm, I have felt for his misfortunes, even the misfortune that drove him from England, which you, yourself, taught me to revere; allow me, therefore, to enjoy your friendship, as usual, a few months longer, before I am required to think of a change of condition, which I shall never heartily approve.”

“The good Queen of Ithaca,” said Wilmot, “when finessing with her suitors, made a respectable figure. Ulysses was the husband of her tenderest affection, her first and only choice; and the men with whom she
was

was surrounded, the sons of ambition, who, aspiring to possess her throne and kingdom, were become so many candidates for her hand. She had, moreover, anxieties of a peculiar nature upon her heart; the death of her beloved and absent Lord, was the inference of consequences, not the positive assertion of one individual. But what shall we say in my Elfrida's situation, for thus trifling with her honest Wilmot?"

"I was never," said Elfrida, "superstitious, in a single instance, nor can I now account for my feelings, but I have misgivings upon my spirits that shock me; I doubt not Captain Venables' report, and yet, methinks, when a woman has the courage to enter into a second marriage, she ought to be well assured of the decease of her first husband."

"Shall I make a voyage to the West, instead of the East-Indies? I will, believe me," said Wilmot, "with pleasure, if you only promise to be mine at my return; nay more, Elfrida, my investigations shall be pursued with the same avidity, to free your breast from every possibility of alarm, as if the completion of my wishes ultimately and unconditionally depended upon my coming at the truth; for you know you may trust your happiness, as securely as your honor, in my hands. But, to teize you no longer upon the subject, I beg leave, once for all,
to

to declare, that nothing, but the title of your husband, shall fix my residence in my native country, or ever allure me to re-visit it."

"I was born," said Elfrida—

"Not, my beloved woman," replied Wilmot, "to have your peace the unending prey of painful solicitation; for, tell me, my Elfrida, that my solicitations are painful to you, and I will never more repeat them." He paused, and Mrs Ellison was silent.

"But are you aware, my dear Madam," said he "of the construction which your silence admits of, and the certain result of that construction, for I will never cease, upon that dear encouragement, to solicit you until you prove propitious."

"I protest," said Mrs. Ellison, "you are not *my* Wilmot, the gentle, the generous, and the good, but quite a man of the world, capable of laying traps for approbation, and bearing down all before you by implied success. I would appeal to my father and mother, but that you have taken care to secure their voice and interest; I, however, insist upon it, you say no more upon the subject, for here comes my father."

"*Tete-a tete*," said the Captain, looking archly, "I find I am come somewhat *mal-a-propos*."

"By no means, my dear Sir," replied Wilmot, "for my suit is not only unprosperous, but so unpromising that I have just received

ceived a command to forego the prosecution of it."

"Our Elfrida," said the Captain, "has purchased a right of deciding for herself, at too high a price, for me ever again to interfere; but it now appears to me, so perfectly you are formed for each other, in temper, taste, and sentiments, that by opposing your union, I have been guilty of an opposition to the will of Heaven; I must look upon it that my Elfrida wars against her destiny, if she refuses you; her mother's happiness, and the joy of my existence, would be promoted by her concurrence with our wishes; but there is still a higher point to be attended to, which we will never lose sight of, and that is my child's own felicity, and she is, to all intents and purposes, the best judge of what will wound or advance it."

Elfrida was struck. "Are you not too serious, my dear Sir," said she, "for the occasion; Mr. Wilmot's friendship is a source of heart-felt satisfaction to us all, and my refusal or acceptance of him, as a husband, such is the good opinion I entertain of him, will not have power either to augment or diminish it."

"Ungenerous Elfrida," said the Captain, "to be content with a situation that is not reciprocally happy. Wilmot persuades himself that our roof alone can give him repose;

and, therefore, petitions that indulgence, whilst you, with an equal degree of friendship, as you fancy, deny him what he conceives his greatest good, without one advantage or accommodation to yourself; but, if I have heard your worst objections," continued the Captain, "to a change of condition, I think Wilmot need not despair."

Elfrida shook her head, smiled, and retired.

Hannah, having been told that Mrs. Elifson and Mr. Wilmot had been above half an hour alone together in the best parlor, and, naturally enough concluding, from their long knowledge of each other, that few words (to borrow her language) when once they came to enter upon the great question, would settle the bargain, ran full speed after her, into her apartment, with, "Well, Madam, and may I ask, without offence, when it is to be?"

Elfrida was angry, for she thought her father suspected her of affectation, a vice she particularly abhorred, when she had actually spoken what her mind dictated, towards Wilmot, and wished to have been believed; this address of Hannah's, therefore, jarred in a very unpleasing manner, on her ear, and she coldly replied, she was not disposed to answer such extraordinary questions, and begged to be alone.

Hannah,

Hannah, having never met with any thing of the kind before, was thunderstruck at this severe rebuke; and, like a mortified and disappointed child, could not bear it, but, turning from Elfrida, to conceal her distress and chagrin, she resolved to retire, where she could weep without interruption.

But Elfrida's good-nature was alarmed, by the little she perceived of the concern, which her reply had excited, and calling her back, "Forgive me, my dear Mrs. Jenkins," said she, "I have treated you ill; but you are all in a combination against me, and I feel myself too weak to oppose you; but, remember, my long-tried friend, my mind tells me this second marriage will be more fatal than the first; and thence my chief reluctance, a reluctance which I cannot conquer."

"Aye, Madam," said Hannah, "how we all meet at last, even in this world, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the learned and the ignorant, have all some unaccountable weakness, as, begging your pardon, I will prove to you, for why? you wonder I am afraid of ghosts, though I tell you, over and over, it is my nature so to be, and there is an end of the matter; and I wonder to see you, who are so wise, and so pious, starting at jack-a-lanterns, and shimsham shadows of your own making;

F 2

though,

though, now I consider of it, these things are real, for one is *lightness* and the other darkness, whereas your notions have no earthly foundation whatever."

Mrs. Ellifon went down to dinner, and found only grave faces, for the Captain was concerned, Mrs. Overbury grieved, and Wilmot in despair at her behavior, though they had settled it not to disturb her with their feelings; to these touching looks was superadded a melancholy silence, which so much distressed her, that, to their general surprize, she burst into tears.

"If Mr. Ellifon," said she, "had expired in England, most chearfully would I have waved my disinclination for marrying a second time, to have made you all happy; but it is a very solemn business to me, and I should die with self-reproach, if, upon the single testimony of Captain Venables, respectable as I acknowledge it is, I was to become Mr. Wilmot's wife, and afterwards discover Mr. Ellifon was alive."

"Sacred," cried Wilmot, "be your delicate apprehensions; I will not, from this instant, press you farther, until we have written letters to, and received answers from, America."

"This hand then," said Elfrida, holding it out to Wilmot, "if Mr. Ellifon's death is confirmed, shall be your's."

Wilmot

Wilmot kissed it, and repeated his assurances to wait, not only uncomplaining, but with chearfulness, for every certainty that ought or could be obtained.

“Now,” said she, wiping away her tears, and resuming her accustomed complacency, “now you are, once again, my own good and kind Wilmot.”

If ever there was a heaven upon earth, it was, during the four months succeeding this agreement between Wilmot and Elfrida, in Captain Overbury’s family ; his daughter recovered her health and bloom, and her lover’s heart was free from every anxiety ; for, though Captain Venables’ unsupported testimony was not sufficient to satisfy Elfrida, Wilmot was clear, from circumstances, that the steps which they had pursued, would bring them a full and perfect confirmation of his report.

Frederic was so much delighted with a sea-life, that he now besought Captain Overbury, since Mr. Wilmot had given up every idea of returning to India, to apply for a proper situation for him, and consent to his return without him. “I love my friends much too well,” said the sensible and grateful boy, “to separate myself wholly from them, but, in the Company’s service, I should have it in my power, alternately, to gratify my inclination for voyaging, and my desire to re-visit them; and who knows,

my Captain, but you will live to see your little friendless favorite, for so I shall never forget I was, till Mr. Wilmot and you took me under your protection, who knows but you may live to see him Commander of an Indiaman?"

Captain Overbury, though he exerted his utmost eloquence to dissuade, would not presume to control him, and he was again fitted out for the East; the parting was a tender scene; but, said Frederic, our meeting, when you hear how well I have behaved, and how rich I am likely to become, will make amends for all, and Ella shall find she has a brother."

Wilmot now told Mr. Overbury of his purchasing the Grange, and its environs; "I, Sir," said he, "have my presentiments, as well as our Elfrida, with this difference, indeed, that her's are all of a distressing, mine of a flattering complexion; for I cannot help thinking that the vicinity of the house to Cluwyd-park, once our Arcadia, will sooner or later, bring Mrs. Overbury back to her fortune. I have only this day, however, continued he, compleated its redemption; for my first voyage, though a successful one, did not enable me to possess it unmortgaged, but it is now absolutely mine; and can we not, my dear Sir, contrive, by obtaining you leave of absence, for us all to make a little tour, for I must have

have your advice in my intended improvement."

"It would, I acknowledge," said the Captain, "be soothing, but I do not see how it is practicable."

"We want only your consent, Sir," returned Wilmot, "and the approbation of these good Ladies, for I am certain I have sufficient interest to procure you the indulgence."

"I am not a rich man, Elfrida," said Wilmot, "but I do not feel myself inclined to break hands with happiness, and run into danger, only to push beyond a comfortable competence. We will be farmers, Sir, and improve every acre we possess, and seven thousand pounds, so improved, will afford an ample competence; nor, indeed, is that all my expectancy, though it is the whole of my possessions, for many large sums, which, but for my exertions would have been lost in India, will now be paid me, upon their transmittance here, having brought their remittance into some other train."

"But, Elfrida," said he, after a short silence, "why do you not draw upon me for the returns of your venture?"

"I do not, Sir," replied she, "want money at present."

"And, therefore," said the Captain,
F 4 "chooses

“chooses to leave her property in your hands, Wilmot, to prevent future transfers.”

“But you may wish to hear its amount,” said Wilmot, “if it even is your intention, Elfrida, to make me premature master of it.”

“I will have nothing to do with either of you,” said she, agreeably, “for you will read my meaning as you please, and seem to make a point of encouraging each other to mistake both my words and actions.”

Hannah, whose heart and soul were set upon seeing Elfrida Mrs. Wilmot, thought all these delays very ridiculous, and would frequently fall into fits of the pouts, when they would not get a word out of her; and, each day, would let her vexation discharge itself with abundant volubility upon Wilmot, as it was, she insisted upon it, all his fault, for humoring her mistress, as he did, in her far-fetched whims and fancies, while she was the laughing-stock of the family, for only supposing the dead could pay a visit to the living; nor should she wonder if he lost her at last, upon the good, old, and true proverb, that faint heart never won fair Lady.

A R E V O L U T I O N.

The long-expected packet from America at length arrived, and Wilmot's conjectures were

were found to be just, Mr. Ellison's Captain bore testimony to his being cut off, as Venables had affirmed, and enclosed the returns, where his name was inserted in the slaughter list.

Elfrida was called upon by Wilmot for the performance of her promise, and, like a woman of honor, met him a few mornings after, attended by Hannah, the only female, besides herself, of the party, and was, with equal pleasure and privacy, given, by her father, to her most worthy lover; and the whole family immediately set off for the Grange.

Arcadia-house was unoccupied, and the park and gardens kept in very indifferent order; but to Wilmot and Elfrida it was, nevertheless, Arcadia; they traversed every footstep of their former habitation and, lived over their infancy, a second time, in recollected delights.

Hannah wept at the sight of the lodge. "Poor Richard," said she, "he was both a very honest, and a very good-natured fellow, and I am not so unnatural as to forget I was once his beloved wife."

A little plain tablet of white marble was put up in the church, inscribed,

To the memory of Frederic Ellison, Esq.

By his father-in-law, Captain Overbury.
mentioning where, when, and how he died.

If happiness, as Wilmot would sometimes say, was greatly in arrears to this family, they were now repaid both interest and principal. Two beautiful boys and a girl were added to this affectionate circle, and Elfrida never shone more fair than in the maternal character ; in a word, she was one of the kindest daughters, without forgetting she was a wife ; one of the most companionable wives, without forgetting she was a mother ; and one of the tenderest of mothers, without a breach of the domestic, the social, the friendly, or even the elegant duties of the individual ; for it was no less a pleasure than it was an honor to her heart, to call forth all the powers which nature had given her into action ; she would, therefore, amuse, regulate, compassionate, instruct, serve and sympathize, by the most rapid and easy transitions imaginable ; for what are commonly called the cares of a family, were to her only so many sources of animation ; nor were her acquaintances certain whether the virtues of her mind, or the graces of her person, were most striking ; and yet this almost divine woman would repeatedly assert, that the sole merit of her temper and conduct, consisted in knowing when she was *pleased*, and being grateful to Heaven and her friends, for the abundant happiness she enjoyed.

Mr.

Mr. Cluwyd, sinking under the united weight of disappointment and age, was, at this juncture, suddenly conveyed to the mansion of his ancestors, to end his days, he told his servants, where they began.

The Captain, who, by the indulgence of his Colonel, resided chiefly at the Grange, only making occasional trips to Portsmouth, was distressed how to introduce himself; but, unconscious of blame, having married, though not loved, Miss Cluwyd, at her father's actual request, he was resolved to make him a visit; "As a neighbor," says he, "I owe him the compliment of waiting upon him, and it may not hereafter be unpleasing to him to know me for his son."

Captain Overbury presented himself at Cluwyd-park, told the old Gentleman their vicinity, and asked his acquiescence, in the name of his family, he said, for his fireside might not, to a man of sensibility, prove either an uninteresting, or an unentertaining scene.

Mr. Cluwyd started. "The word family," replied he, "always electrifies me, by the cruel recollection of what I once possessed. I should accept your kind overture with thankfulness, but that I must fear you and your happy relations, could ill bear to have your tranquillity disturbed, by the unavailing

ing lamentations of a poor old man, who is become a separate link of the great chain."

The Captain was so surprized he could not answer him.

"I had," resumed Mr. Cluwyd, after a deep sigh, "a daughter, beautiful as day, and mild as evening; she was my house-keeper, my companion, my friend; I was not content, for I will not palliate my own conduct, nor knew I the value of my blessed situation, until I had thrown myself out of it for ever.

"I married a young and worthless woman, who deceived me in the first instance, into the unnatural act of abandoning my children, for my daughter was united to one of the best of beings, and by a thousand arts, I am now convinced, contrived to keep them at a distance; for the girl was too soft-tempered, and her husband too liberal-minded, to be capable of insulting her, or despising me, as she procured witnesses to testify in the strongest terms."

The Captain could not conceal the emotion this declaration gave him, but Mr. Cluwyd taking it for honest indignation only, at the treatment he had received, he felt himself obliged, and proceeded.

"In this very house, Sir," said he, "where I am come to breathe my last, was I saved from the hands of ruffians, by this amiable Overbury and in his worthy arms I might have

have died, if I had not ceased to deserve that soothing exit, by my cruelty and injustice towards him; for whole years did I forget his goodness and his generosity, in the fascinations of a woman, who would have robbed me of my last shilling, if I had not detected her, and obliged her to fly with her wicked paramour; and here am I, Sir, a striking mark of the divine punishment, in my second infancy, without one tender friend, or endearing relation in the world; but I will advertise for my children, so soon as I am able to tell them, in my own language, and with my own pen, how much my heart is theirs, both by paternal penitence, and paternal sensations."

"Do you think," said the Captain, "at this distance of time, you could recollect the features of the young man you mention?"

"What, of my Overbury, my chearful, my brave, my affectionate Overbury? I fear I could not know him; I have him in my mind's eye at this very moment; but it is in the bloom of health and hope, and what changes the disappointments I heaped on his head may have caused in him, it is impossible I should conceive, or be prepared for."

"I am reckoned like him," replied the Captain (Mr. Clwyd looked surprized)
"and should be happy, if you will give me
leave,

leave, by my friendly attentions to you, to supply his loss."

"It is Overbury's heart that speaks," said Mr. Cluwyd, "though I do not discover his person. Can it be! O no—You can never be my beloved Overbury."

"Let the tide of joy, my dear Sir," said the Captain, "flow gently in upon your feelings; your frame is too weak to sustain its violence, and behold in me the Overbury you so kindly lament, the son that never ceased to revere you, though unable to force his way through the guards by which you were surrounded."

The old man wept aloud.

"Come near me," said he, "that in the words of the Patriarch, which will best express my wishes, my soul may bless you before I die."

The Captain was deeply affected.

"I dare not ask," said Mr. Cluwyd, having strained his Overbury to his bosom, "I dare not ask if I have still a daughter."

"Fortify your spirits, Sir," said the Captain, "for you have not only your *own* Ella to embrace, but even great-grand children to play around your knee. Your Ella has an Elfrida, the parent stock of the young ones I shall present to you, and all their hearts will rejoice to hear of your affection for me."

"Bring

“ Bring them,” said Mr. Cluwyd, “ O bring them to me. My joy, Overbury, is so great, I fear it will be fatal.”

“ Forbid it every benign power,” said the Captain, holding him up, “ weep, O weep again, Sir, your tears will relieve you.”

“ When I had out-lived,” said the old Gentleman, audibly sobbing, “ even hope itself ; when I seemed to be cut off, in the divine wrath, from every paternal happiness, to have my posterity, to the fourth generation, collected about me ; to have been led by an invisible hand, where I only sought to hide my head and die ; to repose on the filial lap, O, Overbury, it destroys, it destroys me with delight ; but it is your virtue which has drawn down this mighty beatitude upon me.”

“ If you will endeavor to recover yourself,” said the Captain, “ you shall, my dear Sir, see how a few years has branched you out ; but if you will allow me to regulate their introduction, you shall rise by gentle gradations to the summit ; your great-grand children will give a softer stroke to your nerves, though they will not, after your first acquaintance with them, perhaps interest you less ; I will, therefore bring them to you.”

“ Never shall you leave me more,” said Mr. Cluwyd, “ so send, or order as you please,

please, for, from this hour, Cluwyd-park is your's, and I am your's; your happy father, Overbury, your happy guest, your sovereign prince, my boy, for my power will gain strength from alienation; and, though princes reign over a mixed community alone, I shall have my children for my subjects."

The Captain dispatched a messenger to desire that Elfrida, accompanied by her little ones, would come to Arcadia.

"Your relation, Sir," said Mr. Overbury, "gave your seat a new title, and, you see the force of custom, I did not remember I was now at Cluwyd-park; but Cluwyd-park will now prove Arcadia to us all."

"And let it," said the old Gentleman, "in honor of our re-union, return to its pastoral name, for I too shall find it a blissful scene."

"Elfrida, Sir," said the Captain, "has an husband, and such an husband—but you will know somewhat of his worth when I have leisure to relate the obligations I owe him. I will just order that Elfrida may wait in the anti-chamber, until, having seen her cherub offspring, you can, without too much fatigue, bear her presence."

"But, Overbury," said Mr. Cluwyd, "there is one ill consequence that will result from this day's happiness, the world, at a time when I am on the point of quitting it,

it, will be, beyond measure, dear to me; but Heaven, I doubt not, will compassionate and pardon sensations, which its own gracious influence and bounty gives rise to, even though at the awful period of my dissolution they should be found too strong for regulation, and alone extinguishable by the extinction of my existence."

"Here they come," said the Captain, looking out, "unconscious come of the felicity that awaits them; Elfrida, (speaking to her from the window) let Mr. Cluwyd's servant bring Overbury to me, we are impatient to receive him."

Overbury, Elfrida's eldest child, ran up to his grandpapa, but, surveying Mr. Cluwyd attentively, he said, as if by instinct, "What, Sir; have I more papas than ever?"

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Overbury, "this is your grandpapa, your mama's grandpapa, and my father; and now let us hear what pretty compliment you can make him, to welcome him to Arcadia."

"I will love you, Sir," said Overbury, taking hold of Mr. Cluwyd's hand, "almost better than all my papas,"

"And why so, my blessed infant," said Mr. Cluwyd, embracing him, "why will you be so good to me?"

"Because you are the oldest, and may be the wisest, but not the goodest, for nobody

body can be gooder than the two papas I have."

"Ah then, Overbury," said the Captain, "you won't love him best at last."

"Yes, Sir, but I will."

"Well explain yourself, my dear, for we wish to understand you."

"Why then, Sir, I will so love him, first for himself, then for my papa Wilmot, then for you, and then for my mama Overbury, and won't that, Sir, (to Mr. Cluwyd) be loving you more than all the rest, when I love you for all the rest, and for yourself too?"

"Sweet, sweet arithmetic," said Mr. Cluwyd, "engaging child!"

Elfrida and the two other infants were now admitted—what a subject for the pencil! the pen is not capable of doing it justice.

The full of years, seated upon a sofa, and half supported by the Captain, whose countenance was touched into unusual grace, as that of Mr. Cluwyd' was brightened by sunbeams of delight, the little Overbury, who had mounted up behind his new papa, bending forward on his shoulder, to see how Venables and Elfrida would behave, and Mrs. Wilmot kneeling before them, and, with her angel face, presenting her little ones to their grandpapa, who held out his arms to receive them, as they did their little arms
to

to be received by him—Human imagination cannot devise a more tender or pathetic group.

Such was their situation, when Hannah, having heard a confused report of these wonders, and, whose affectionate curiosity never slept, flew after her mistress to Arcadia, and getting a side glance into the apartment, “It is, it is, my old master,” said she, rushing in and falling upon her knees by the children, hoping his honor had not forgot poor Hannah, that was to have been murdered with him by the villains.

The old Gentleman recollected her, said she was always an honest and a kind-tempered girl, and that he was glad to see her.

She arose, and was hedging off, but the Captain stopped her, “No, no, Mrs. Jenkins,” said he, “I will not, at present, trust you out of my sight; I must not have *my* Ella’s spirits hurried. Let me now, Sir, bring your daughter and my wife, and prepare her to see you.”

“We owe even this happiness,” said the enraptured Mrs. Overbury, “and every advantage it may be productive of, to Wilmot, where can he have hid himself to lose these touching interviews?” She was greatly affected by her father’s kind reception, and Mr. Wilmot at length joined them.

“This

"This is the last of us," said the Captain, presenting Wilmot to Mr. Cluwyd, "but not the least, for to him we owe all we are, and all we have; such a treasure, my dear Sir, as his heart, is seldom met with in this world."

Mrs. Wilmot enjoyed this testimony of her husband's merit, and agreed with Hannah, that he deserved every praise that could be bestowed upon him.

When the tumult of their joy began to subside, Mr. Cluwyd informed them that he had withstood the threats, as well as the endearments of his wife; or, as the Poet expressed it, all the arts

Of wilful woman, laboring for her purpose;
and preserved Cluwyd-park and all his landed property from incumbrance, though he had permitted her to dissipate the accruing rents, and a large reserve he had in the stocks; and, as mortgaging his fortune was an act she could not accomplish without him, and had, moreover, every reason to fear he would go off without making a will, consequently, that instead of being benefited, she should be a sufferer by his death, she let him live out his days, otherwise, from the general turn of her character, it was most probable, she would not have been over nice about ways or means of getting possession of any fortune to which she had known herself intitled.

Captain

Captain Overbury and his family having removed to Arcadia, for Mr. Cluwyd would not rest, until, like the confiding Lear, he had given his children all, and that this long neglected son-in-law found himself secured in an handsome inheritance; for, during Mr. Cluwyd's life, he never appeared to consider himself as any thing more than an agent in the management of that Gentleman's fortune, he told his friends, he thought it his duty to give the Secretary at War, in return for the favor he had shewn him, an opportunity of making some other family happy.

Accordingly, with the full approbation and consent of all his friends, he wrote him a no less polite than singular letter; for resignations, from such exalted notions, as opening a door of prosperity upon some brave and unknown brother officer, were seldom brought before him.

The Captain informed his Lordship what happiness he had enjoyed in his Majesty's service, under his benign auspices, while his commission included the chief support of himself and dearest relations, but that being at length become what he called an affluent man, by the bounty of his wife's father, with whom he entirely resided, he took the liberty to request, that his Lordship would bestow it upon some Gentleman, within his knowledge, who, like himself, had spent his

his youth in the field, and found his decline approach unrewarded ; adding, that it gave him great pleasure in every sense of the word, to have it in his power to aid his Lordship's benevolent inclinations, by preparing an agreeable surprize for some worthy heart; for that he could not reconcile it to his feelings, when abounding with the good things of this world, to stand between a meritorious character, and the claims such a character had upon his Sovereign for a comfortable provision. Concluding with saying, had any other Nobleman presided over military affairs, he would have sold the commission himself, and would, himself, have sought out a proper person to have advanced with the produce; but that in Lord ———'s hands, the work would be much better performed; at the same time that he enabled himself to testify the veneration he should ever bear him, &c. &c.

Having dispatched this letter of business, and, as he deemed it, of moral and humane obligation, his next proposal was to intreat Captain Venables and his wife to come down, and, by occupying the Grange-house, indulge them with their company ; and from the unanimous wishes of his family thus addressed him :

“ We have, my dear Sir,” said he, “ most unexpectedly, had wealth poured in upon us;

us; Mr. Cluwyd, my father-in-law, whom you have often heard us mention, is most happily disenchantèd, and we are become one mind and one family.

“ You have seen us in our humble line, and we have you, under Heaven, to thank for our present heart-felt felicity; for all the riches, and all the glories in creation would have been incapable of interesting us a moment, if our Elfrida had not, in her hour of peril, been preserved by you. Come, then, no less the friend, than the author of our tranquillity, come, and heighthen the pleasures which we can now command.

“ A house of our Wilmot’s, which we have been compelled by our common parent to exchange for the paternal roof, is ready for your reception; nor can we make a more self-interested use of it; for, to be very plain with you, Captain Venables, if we had known a family upon earth that had higher claims to our remembrance, or that could give us more delight, by mixing with us in social intercourse, you would not have been troubled with this request from us all; for, do not mistake it for an invitation, and, of course, the earlier you let us see you, the greater obligation you will confer upon your devoted, &c. &c.

Your little godson asks your blessing, who is all amazement at his encreased number of papas, for Overbury, it seems, tells him, he will

will not have fingers and thumbs enough, by-and-by, to name them all."

A T H U N D E R - C L A P.

Eight successive years did these worthy people pass in a round of refined and exquisite delight, blessed and blessing wherever they came; the very seasons seemed only to vary to do them pleasure; the enlivening spring, the blooming summer, the redundant autumn, and the social winter, were equally enjoyed by them; in a word, their conduct was goodness, and their hearts gratitude, for their fellow-individuals were benefited by their fortune, and the Deity honored by their lives.

Mr. Cluwyd, in his eighty-seventh year, went off in a gradual decline, the thread of his existence was, indeed, spun so fine, that it might much rather be said to cease to be, than to be broken.

He retained his senses to his latest breath; however, what he had so much apprehended, an impious reluctance to obey the divine mandate, from an affectionate attachment to his children, was a sin he did not commit, but, as the poet describes,

*He from his feast of life rose satisfied,
Thank'd Heav'n that he had liv'd, and that
he died.*

As

As he had attained a good old age, and was only in the course of nature lost to them, after the first awful shock which the dissolution of a beloved friend, at whatever late period, will give the feeling heart, they buried him with resignation, and wished to experience an end like his; for, except the error of uniting himself to an artful woman, and forgetting for a time his natural connexions, he had lived the life of duty as he went, and closed his eyes in peace with all mankind; conceiving it the peculiar favor of Heaven, that he was not only permitted to die in the arms of his children, but had been spared, in his last hours, from weeping the loss of any one of those who were dear to him; frequently saying, "This is as it should be; nature here is regular in her course; my children must follow me, but for them to have led the way would have inverted the order of things, and brought me down with sorrow, instead of the blessed tranquillity which I now enjoy, to my grave. I fear not to trust them to Heaven, or their own hearts, for well meriting is their rule of life, and happiness will be their reward."

About six months after this little cloud had brushed by them, and when their horizon was bright, clear, and promising, the parlor-door was suddenly opened, and Mrs. Wilmot was informed that Hannah was in fits.

Both her humanity and her tenderness were alarmed, for she loved her as if she had been a parent; she hastened, therefore, to the good woman's apartment, and found her in a most distressed condition, with a letter crushed close in one of her hands.

With proper assistance she recovered, so far as to open her eyes, when seeing Mrs. Wilmot sitting by her, she thrust the letter up the peak of her stays, and, throwing her arms about her, fell into an agony of tears.

"What can't his mean, my dear Hannah," said Mrs. Wilmot, "tell me, tell me, what affects you thus, and relieve your agitated spirits. O, Mrs. Jenkins, what fatal cause is there for this most extraordinary behavior?"

Hannah made signs for every one to withdraw, then raising herself from the bed, she knelt before Mrs. Wilmot, took both her hands in her's, kissed them, wept upon them, looked up with anguish in her face, then clasping her own hands together, in a praying and melancholy attitude, "Lord have mercy upon us," cried she, "have mercy I mean upon you, best of women. What is beauty, goodness, wealth! Who will not almost despair of divine protection for your sake? But shew yourself a pious, pious, pious angel, bow your head, without breaking your heart, to the will of your Maker;

Maker; tell your poor Hannah she shall never leave you—and—I cannot speak it—.”

Mrs. Wilmot's mind, by this preparation, was wound up to the most fearful pitch of apprehension. “My children,” said she,

“I left them all well and happy; my father and mother are in safety, my Wilmot lives; but were these most precious friends, at this moment, dead at my feet, my heart would feel less torture than from the alarm you have given me; for there is, Hannah, one crushing evil, and, if that has fallen upon me, who shall support me?”

Hannah, bathed in tears, shook her head.

“Does Mr. Ellison,”—said Elfrida—she could not utter more.

“Alas! alas!” said Hannah, with fatal significance, Mrs. Wilmot sunk down in a rightful convulsion.

Hannah now lost her own distresses in that of her beloved mistress; she raised her in her arms; she called upon her; “O, speak to me, speak to me,” said she, “or I shall die.”

Mrs. Wilmot at length recovered. “Hannah,” said she, in heart-piercing accents, “my faithful Hannah, what can I do? The innocence of my intention would soften this severest of strokes, but my father, mother, my what?—most tenderly beloved and most

cruelly undone Wilmot; my sweet children, children of this illegal marriage. How wide the killing evil spreads! Where shall I hide my miserable head! I will never behold my family more; and would I not fly to avoid the injured Ellison! O my prophetic heart. Did I not tell you, my worthy woman, I had terrors I could not account for?"

Hannah could only weep.

"My mind is all a chaos—Where can I go? How shall I contrive to shelter myself from the stern brow of Mr. Ellison, and save myself from being a spectator of the tumbling ruins of my domestic happiness? Speak to me, Hannah.—What steps, in this depth of wretchedness, what steps are left for me to take?"

"O misery!" said Hannah, "Could you not, however, live with your father and mother?"

"How!" cried she wildly, "What do you take me to be made of? My heart, do you suppose it would not bleed to—No, no, no, I must fly, I must fly. Ah! is not that my—is it not Mr. Wilmot's voice. What is he now to me? What has he not been to me! I loved him perhaps, too, too well, and—"

Wilmot opened the door, but only half entered, he was immovable; the horror of his Elfrida's countenance; the Elfrida he had parted with a few moments before, as composed

composed as she was beautiful; he seemed rooted to the spot, when, endeavoring to collect herself, she approached him.

“Wilmot,” said she, “leave me, you must, you must leave me.”

“Leave you,” cried Wilmot, “pressing her to his heart, never, while I exist.”

“O, my once-loved husband, my ever-esteemed friend, we must part. Heaven, itself, commands us to part. ’Tis all over, Wilmot, the late chaste Elfrida, has lived a life of adultery; she has, she has, at this instant, another—”

“Yet,” replied Wilmot, too clearly understanding her, “may not this thunderbolt be, in some small degree, turned aside? Is it not possible for something to be done to prevent its ravages—I, Elfrida, I will be the sacrifice—Support your father and mother, forsake not our dear—”

“Wilmot,” said Elfrida, “I am the out-cast of creation; a mark of wretchedness is set upon me; it is you that must perform the task you would impose on me; and, if you ever were what I have found you, and believe you, the guardian of my fame, my peace, my person, guard them now; suffer me, in solitude, to become collected, to check the rapidity of my ideas, to forget what I have enjoyed; whilst you support the drooping head of age, the wounded spirit of the afflicted; and let your children, dearest, dearest children, let them learn to—”

“Elfrida,” said Wilmot, “whither, O whither would you go?”

“From Mr. Ellifon, from the world, from you.”

“Your mind, Elfrida, is cruelly disordered, do not augment it; you shall be indulged in all you ask, but Hannah must attend you. Your head, your heart, O calm them both, or the tragedy will be deep indeed; if you will endure it, if you will live, if you can rest upon the rectitude of your principles, and support—Elfrida, my Elfrida, twice lost to me, you will save us all.”

“Hide me,” said she, “Hannah,” turning from Wilmot, “save me. Away from me, all those that would melt me into anguish, into unutterable regret. Leave me, all those that wish me well.” Hannah shook her head at Wilmot to retire; he did so, and the separation of soul and body would have been heaven to the pang it cost him.

Hearing the door shut, Elfrida looked up, “Come, Hannah,” said she, in a quick, but plaintive accent, “we must be gone; let us be gone; we can walk to the ferry, for well it is said, that when the mind’s at ease the body’s delicate. I will not enter a carriage, nor must I see another of these heart-rending persons. Come, my friend, air and exercise will relieve us.”

She paused a moment, then wringing her hands, “But no, it cannot be,” said she, “bring

"bring me my children, Hannah, I must have one parting interview with them; gather them around me; I will not distress their tender minds; it will kill me to speak to them, but it will be distraction to go without beholding them. O bring them immediately."

Hannah made a quick return, with little Elfrida in her arms, and the boys following her.

Mrs. Wilmot knelt down between the two eldest, with her eyes earnestly fixed upon the youngest child, which laughed and patted her face, with all the sweetness of infant innocence; while the boys, from seeing her weep, hung their little heads, and Overbury, with a look of tender meaning, said, "Poor dear mamma is ill."

This was too much for her; she pressed them both in an agony to her bosom; "Beloved infants," said she, "I am, indeed, ill of an incurable disease; but the grave, the grave, Hannah, there is a place of rest, even for me."

"Let naughty mamas die," said Overbury, "but never our mama, for we should die too. Should not we, Venables?"

"Take them away, Hannah," said she, "it is not in human powers to support such a scene."

Mr. Overbury came to the chamber-door as the children were conveyed out by Han-

nah, who had much difficulty to get Master Overbury away.

Finding Elfrida on her knees, this fond parent, with a countenance distorted with grief, knelt down by her; "Elfrida," said he, "child of my dearest hopes, pity, pardon and save your father."

"O Sir," cried she, falling on his bosom, "O, Sir, what a moment is this!"

"Judge of my feelings," said he, "judge of them by your own. My excess of affection for you has undone you; but your father's reason, will you not do much to preserve your poor father's reason, and your dear mother's life? We all depend upon you."

Elfrida fainted, and Mr. Overbury, calling Hannah, would not further oppress her; but, with streaming eyes, and hands uplift to Heaven, he retired.

"Where is my child?" cried Mrs. Overbury, running wildly into the room, "my gentle, my good, my dearest child. Barbarous kindness! they would have kept me from her! they would not tell me she was at peace! Blessed, favored spirit," said she, gazing upon her, and imagining she was dead, "of my Elfrida, look down; thy wretched mother will not long survive thee."

"She is not dead, Madam," said Hannah, "so, for her sake, compose yourself; these partings

partings will finish her; you find she is alive (Elfrida sighed piteously) leave her, leave her, if you would preserve her, before she beholds you."

Mrs. Overbury got up, for she had thrown herself upon the floor by the side of her Elfrida, wept, retired, stopped, wept again; "My head, my head," said she, what cruel ravage does sorrow make in so short a time! Child of my heart, farewell!"

Elfrida slowly recovered. "I fear I cannot stand," said she, "yet we must fly; this is no place of rest or safety for me. Mr. Ellison, the incensed Mr. Ellison, must not see me—in the grave alone—"

"We shall be safe," said Hannah, "and put your trust in Heaven."

"Where is Mr. Ellison?"

"In London, Madam," replied Hannah, "he was taken prisoner, only, when he was thought to be killed, and carried by the Indians up to the back settlements."

"He is in London—then we must bend our course, Mrs. Jenkins, another way.—But who am I?—What is my name?—Let us be gone, if you would save me from despair."

"We must have a carriage," said Hannah, "for I cannot walk far, and you will be so exposed to observation (she durst not say fatigue) and who knows who we may meet?"

This had the desired effect. "My guardian angel," cried she, "you are right; let me but escape the eyes of Ellifon, and I will be resigned; his mind is not tender; Wilmot he never loved—he would hate me—insult him—Yes, blessed thought, we will avoid the rencounter—but Mrs. Jenkins, no coach, that was once mine, will I enter; nothing that I ever possessed in my state of innocent, yet horrid adultery, shall accommodate me—I will have new clothes, Hannah, as I shall have new scenes, and we will work together for our bread."

"How can that be necessary?" said Hannah, "Has not Captain Overbury a fortune? Will you refuse your own parents providing for you?"

"Right; you are once more right, my good Hannah—that will not be sinful—Captain Overbury's marriage was an honest one. I believe my grandfather remembered even the undone Elfrida in his will."

"I will send and order a chaise," said Hannah, "and do, my dearest Madam, submit yourself to my care and management."

"Be it so" said Elfrida, "but as you value my reason and my life, do not betray me into dishonor—I will not eat the bread of adultery—What my father helps us to will bless us, but an everlasting bar is set up

up between me—and—that best of men—your favorite—need I name him—and yet you see I live—My heart will never break—but while I have strength let us go”

Hannah sent and ordered a chaise, and Mr. and Mrs. Overbury, Wilmot and Ella, a melancholy group, were assembled in the parlor, without daring to enquire into, much less to either regulate or oppose Elfrida’s proceedings.

They were waiting breakfast for Elfrida, and had called for the children, as usual, to receive her, when Wilmot, pale and dejected, entered the parlor.

He shook his head with sorrowful meaning at Ella, pressed Mrs. Overbury’s hand, “And now,” said he, to the Captain, “now, Sir, will your philosophy be brought to proof—It is my misfortune to be the messenger of most distressful tidings, and your example, in bearing them, will be followed by your whole family.”

“Our Elfrida!” said the Captain, with an air of distraction.

“Our Elfrida,” said Wilmot, “has received the wound I am going to give you—O, Sir, think if there is one calamity greater than another upon earth, and that greatest should be poured out upon your head, think what you must suffer.”

“Relieve me,” said Mr. Overbury, “I
conjure

conjure you, from my own apprehensions."

"Ellison," said Wilmot.—

The Captain jumped up and withdrew, and went to see his fallen child, fallen from the utmost height of human felicity.—Ella sunk at Wilmot's feet, and, while he was raising her, Mrs. Overbury followed her husband; and the reader is already acquainted with the sad interview between these worthy distressed people; we will, therefore, return to Elfrida and Hannah.

ACTS OF FRIENDSHIP.

A chaise was soon at the door—Hannah put her whole exchequer in her pocket, and, with hartshorn and a few other necessaries, which she had collected, they drove off for the ferry.

They had not got far before a scream of stop, stop, made the postillion look behind him, and Hannah, at her mistress' request, putting her head out of the window, beheld Ella running like a wild creature after them; Elfrida opened the carriage-door and her arms to receive her, and she panted for some time, before she recovered her breath, in quite an alarming manner.

At length—"I will die with you, Madam," said she, "I will follow you wherever

ever you go—You shall not cast off the child you have so long protected. I am an innocent sufferer in this bad world as well as yourself—have no father, mother, relation upon earth—admit me then the companion of your flight, and let Hannah return, for she is much wanted at—”

Elfrida now for the first time, shed tears. “This is touching, this is soothing,” said she, “yes Ella, I thank you, you are the fittest friend for such a fugitive as I am become—your good-nature, your chearfulness will support me. Hannah, my friendly Hannah, we must part—nor shall I now regret you, for you hear you are wanted, greatly wanted, I believe, by those who are most dear to me—What a monster to remember only myself—Ella and I will pray for you all—farewell.”

“Miss Ella,” said Hannah, “here is a little money—my own money, Madam, and Captain Overbury will repay me. To the friend of goodness like your’s, my dear Lady, do I recommend you—the Almighty will not always punish.”

She quitted the chaise, and sat down upon a bank to watch it to the last moment it was visible, and then returned, a monument of sorrow to Arcadia.

“What name must I give myself?” said Elfrida, “Ellison and Wilmot are equally guilty ones—I must call myself Overbury—
yes,

yes, that will sanctify me—that is an unblemished name—and what will you be, my Ella ?”

“Your sister, your friend,” replied she, “if you will honor me so far as to acknowledge me for such. But what a world it is we live in, that the blameless and the worthy can be plunged into disgrace for actions not their own---the sin and reproach of circumstances, I, as well as you, am guiltless of, have fallen on my head.”

“Sensible, feeling, girl,” said Elfrida, embracing her, “you deserve---but I dare not say you will be happy---and yet would virtue be discouraged to behold me, even the wreck I am, for you see how astonishingly I am supported ; ’tis guilt alone, Ella, that destroys.”

Elfrida, for she started at every other name, now discovered the shadow of a man on horseback, following them. “Look out,” said she, “and tell me who it is---we will not have our innocent rout stained by---”

“It is Captain Venables, Madam,” said Ella “you will not, surely, be sorry to see your friend, Captain Venables.”

He rode up to the window. “If it will not offend you,” said he, “I am obliged to go to Bath, upon particular business, I will escort you thither, or till I see you in a place of safety.”

“And

“And what is safety?” exclaimed Elfrida, in my situation; the happy, indeed, shrink at every storm; and yet, Captain Venables, your presence compels me to feel there was a misery beyond what I am now plunged in, and my deliverance from that is owing to you.”

“Sweet and gentle Elfrida,” said the Captain, “I do not profess to think that any condition, without self-condemnation, can be more trying than yours; but, nevertheless, you have many consolations. Had your misfortunes been the result of my mistaken report, I could not now have approached you; but time, enquiry, all that human wisdom could dictate, or moral principles and duty demanded, was done by you; and your purity, your rectitude, will be a rock of defence for your sensibility, when you once recover the exercise of your powers.”

“I hear you,” said Elfrida, “with a calmness, I never expected to enjoy. You, Sir, are a good man, and I will not disdain to owe you obligations, come, then, into the chaise, and tell me, for my mind will bear it, all the destruction this discovery has wrought in my family.”

Captain Venables joyfully put the reins of his horse into the hands of the chaise-boy, and took his seat between the two lovely wanderers.

This

This humane Gentleman had happened to call upon Wilmot to take a ride with him, and having heard the tale of calamity, and the succeeding conduct of Elfrida, he sent a messenger to acquaint his wife, with his resolution to follow her, and procure her every softening accommodation possible, and, having a good horse, had soon come up with her.

“ I will,” said the Captain, “ with pleasure, perform the task you have given me, and truth shall dwell upon my lips.”

“ The scene was, at first, affecting, solemn, alarming; but their tenderness for you operated like magic on their hearts. If we would have our Elfrida live, said they; if we would not have her crushed by the calamity of her destiny, we must set her an example of fortitude and resignation; and wherefore, said your father, seeming to throw off a weight from his heart, wherefore should the innocent droop the head? the hand that bruises is omnipotent. We have received our good things, we will sustain the evil ones during the divine pleasure, and Elfrida shall learn of us how to bear the rod of affliction.”

“ Every word you speak,” said Elfrida, “ strengthens my mind—It shall be so—we will wait the good time, when, at least, our dissolution will arrive, and this mysterious distress, in its intention and uses, shall stand revealed

revealed before us—nor shall we murmur at the sacred explanation—I am composed.”

They passed the ferry, and reaching Bath that night, slept at an inn.

Captain Venables proposed their fixing their residence in a village near Chippenham, the Rector of which was known to him, and to whose friendship and care he would recommend them; but Elfrida said no; the metropolis is the place of concealment for the vicious, and can alone give tranquillity to those who wish not to be known—You can have no commission to constrain me—the violated laws render it impossible for you to possess any delegated power where I am concerned, and I will, upon reflection, go to London.”

“ You shall, Madam, go where you please; but may not a friend, whose business draws him to the same spot, have leave to attend you?”

“ Ah, Mr. Venables,” said Elfrida.

“ Upon my honor,” replied he, “ I do not deceive you—I am now bound, on an urgent concern, for the great city—Had I not met with you in my rout, I should, perhaps, have passed a day or two idly in Bath; you cannot think the sacrifice of an idle day or two any great matter, and we can all go in one of the machines.”

“ Will no stranger—?” said Elfrida.

“ Not

“Not one,” returned the Captain, “shall push their face amongst us. Nor will any thing be more easy than to obtain a carriage to ourselves, out of the many which will, to-morrow morning, leave this place.”

Elfrida was satisfied, and retired to her chamber, attended by Ella.

“How must I pray?” said she, “for both my husbands? for illegitimate, though most beloved children? for my second marriage is not valid.”

“Comforter of hearts,” said she, kneeling, “and all-wise disposer of events, look down with compassion upon thy creature, whose gratitude has ascended to the heaven of heavens, and whose resignation will not be forgotten—support—heal—save. Amen.”

Captain Venables congratulated himself upon his success, for his sole business, as we have already mentioned, was to smooth the way before the amiable fugitives, and see them properly situated.

Wilmot, having collected his wretched friends together, was earnest with them, for Elfrida's sake, not to sink under the severe blow. “Upon you, Sir,” addressing Mr. Overbury, knowing well the self-reproach that would be added to his sorrow, “we particularly lean for support, and you must not forsake us. Elfrida, the lovely wretched one, has left Arcadia; left me, Sir, as well as you, her mother, and these tender pledges of
of

of our lost felicity—it was her last request—her injunction, that I should endeavor to render myself useful to her parents; useful was her word, too well adapted to our present condition; for what was the delight of my existence is become a task I have scarce power to perform; and her pity-moving petition that you would both assist me, calmly assist me, in the care of mine, hers, and your children.”

Wilmot, in his exertions for the peace of his Elfrida, in the personal safety of her father and mother, rose almost superior to mortality—and, he was so far happy in his eloquence, that it passed into a general resolution to forego every self-concern, and devote their cares and their feelings, to promote the wishes and well-being of Elfrida.

Hannah, at her return, without notice or ceremony, entered the parlor.

“What can this mean?” cried Wilmot, “Is—O is my Elfrida no more?”

Hannah, with tears, and in unconnected sentences, told them how it had happened that she was discharged; and who was become the travelling companion of her mistress; they all rejoiced in the incident, and Hannah resumed her accustomed office of living with the children.

“I wish Frederic was in England,” said Mr. Overbury, “he might attend his father
at

at the Grange-house, for no doubt he will soon be with us—from what a height, my beloved Wilmot, are we fallen!”

Ellison's letter was now, for the first time, recollected and asked for, which had produced all this affliction, and was as follows :

“ Mrs. Jenkins,

“ Though I know you never had much regard for me, and from the misfortune into which I plunged your heavenly mistress, have, I suppose, taught yourself to hate me most heartily, I must entreat you will inform me where I shall find Mrs. Ellison.

“ I fled from England, to return, I thought, no more—entered a Volunteer in America ; and, weary of existence, though from the sacred sentiments I had imbibed from my wife, I durst not terminate it with my own hands ; I solicited every post of danger, hoping to be cut off by the enemy.

“ But who shall presume to carve his destiny ? I was sent out upon a reconnoitring party, which was suddenly surrounded by a tribe of Indians, and all put to the sword except myself. The carnage is not to be described. I begged to be dispatched, but was refused that favor. I lamented for my friends, who would not know what was become of me, and this lamentation proved fatal to a young fellow, whom they had taken prisoner a few hours before

before; for, with wanton cruelty, they made us change clothes, and telling me by an interpreter, that he should be my messenger, stabbed him in various parts of the body, and threw him into the slaughtered heap, and bore me away with them to the woods.

“ The number of our detachment being complete, this barbarous frolic gave so strong a color to the report of my death, that I was buried, I may say, by proxy, and have read my name among the returns of the killed.

“ All the years of my absence, from the first seven months after my arrival, I have passed in savage captivity, compelled to teach the military exercise to beings not a remove from brutes; and to become, what they called, the husband of an horrid creature, the daughter of the chief, whose prisoner I was, and whose death at length set me free; for it appeared that I owed my life to the striking resemblance my person bore to a husband she had lost, and never ceased grieving for, until I was presented to her, and in return for my good behavior to her, she made it her dying request to her father, that I should have my liberty, and an handsome present to enable me to re-visit my native country; saying, it would disturb her in her grave, if I took another wife in that quarter of the-world.

“ And

“ And thus, Mrs. Jenkins, enriching me with gifts, which plunder and rapine had given them possession of, and unknowing how to restore them to their right owner, they religiously fulfilled their promise to the dead, and I am returned to lay myself and my little wealth at my Elfrida's feet.

“ But, hell and torture ! is she yet mine ? Has not the whining Wilmot built his happiness upon the poor prodigal's ruin ? and prepared curses, instead of soothing, for his return to the house of his father ? Tell me, Mrs. Jenkins, O tell me all. But I will not tamely lose her---no second marriage can rob me of my claims---I value not my life, unpossessed of Elfrida---and will die in the most desperate enterprizes, to make her once more mine.

“ My temper, I confess it, Mrs. Jenkins, is furious, but my love is tender, mild, such, in a word, as my Elfrida must inspire, and such as my Elfrida can accept.

“ I will come down to Arcadia, if I do not receive an answer by the return of the post ; and a thousand woes upon the head of that individual, be it whosoever it may, that can have the heart to wish me not re-united to my wife.

“ ELLISON.”

“ This,”

“This,” said the Captain, “will teach us to rejoice at Elfrida’s absence; I will ride over to the ferry; and wait this violent and unfortunate man’s arrival, tell him all that has happened since his departure, and, if possible, reconcile him to an event which no human wisdom could obviate, or human justice can condemn. You must not see him, Wilmot---for our Elfrida’s honor and happiness you must not see him. We know your principles and conduct may be relied upon, but there is no trusting such a character as Ellison, rendered desperate as he will be, when he hears what we have to relate. We must serve him, we must soften him, we must win him into resignation, whilst we, for our support, look through this dark shade to some heavenly ray; and, at least, live so as not to be the authors of any additional wretchedness that may reach us---for it is the upright man, alone, who meets reward, by a reverse of incidents which he had the piety not to aggravate or inflame, by his impatience in the hour of affliction.”

“Let me go, Sir,” said Hannah, “for though my heart is so warm in the cause, I can best explain the matter, and have nothing to fear from him; it will torture you to support a scene, I shall, in a manner, be unconcerned at; for he deserves to suffer, and will suffer unpitied by me. I have not wherewith, at this present time, to bestow
any

any upon him, and who can say wrong she does, that does to the best of her power upon every occasion?"

Wilmot, Mrs. Overbury, and even the Captain, approved of Hannah's proposal, and she was sent to the ferry-house, the succeeding afternoon, for there having been some mistake in the delivery of the letter, it was probable he might be there already, though Elfrida had been so happy, to their knowledge, as to have escaped him.

W A R M A L T E R C A T I O N .

Hannah sent back the carriage as soon as she got within sight of the house; and, walking slowly on, perceived a young man of a fierce and bloated aspect seated in the window.

Her mind misgave her, as she afterwards related, and so great was the change in Ellison's appearance, that if she had been a reader of plays, she would have exclaimed, in the language of Calista,

"Is this the gay Lotbario!"

She was, however, determined not to appear frightened, so going up point blank, as she phrased it, to the stranger; she asked him if his name was Ellison.

He started---knew her---and bid her come in.

"He

"He had alighted," he said, "but the moment before she accosted him, and had every thing to learn from her information; and so, Mrs. Jenkins, without preface or apology, let me hear what news you have for me—my letter was not thought worthy an answer."

Hannah explained that point to his satisfaction.

"Where—where," said he, "is my Elfrida?"

"You shall hear," said Hannah, assuming all the courage she was able, "but you must, Sir, let me tell you every thing in its turn, and promise to listen to me patiently."

"Be brief," said Ellifon, looking somewhat sternly at her, "for patience is not a lesson I am master of. My misfortunes, Mrs. Jenkins, unfitted me for such calm studies."

"Why then," said Hannah, "you remember the Gentleman who behaved so like a friend to you, the unfortunate night you played at cards and fought a duel."

"I do," said Ellifon, "and remember him with gratitude, for he most essentially served me."

"He conveyed Mrs. Ellifon to her father's lodgings, took a post-chaise and set off for Arcadia, to break the sad news upon the Captain and his wife, accompanied them to

town, made interest, and got Mr. Overbury a *real* Captain's commission."

"And who?" said Ellifon, "who is this God-like man?"

"You shall hear all by-and-by," said Hannah, "the vile wretch who won your fortune wanted to get acquainted with our family, but was scornfully rejected; we all set off for Portsmouth, for poor Richard being dead and gone, I gave up my life and soul to them—and so—"

"But the Gentleman, I hope," said Ellifon, "was not of your party."

"What, Mr. Wilmot?" said Hannah, quite forgetting herself in her terror.

"Who mentioned Wilmot?" said Ellifon—"I am asking you after the Gentleman to whom I was so much obliged."

This called Hannah's mind back. "He, Lord help us—he go with us—no, no, we never saw him from the time of our leaving London, till after you was dead."

"Torture and distraction!" said Ellifon, "and is this man married to my Elfrida?"

"I wish you would hear me," said Hannah."

"I will hear no more," cried he, "but mark me, Mrs. Jenkins, he must resign her—her second marriage is of no effect—I shall be sorry to quarrel with a man I am so much

much indebted to, but he must not dare to keep my Elfrida from me."

"How wildly you talk," said Hannah, "did I say a word about marrying, you won't hear me, Sir—"

"Proceed," said Ellifon, "I will not again interrupt you."

"And so we went to live at Portsmouth; when what does this horrid Lord do, but employ a madam *barrimadan* to decoy Mrs. Ellifon to a water party I think she called it. I, poor harmless fool as I am, went with them; and a demure-looking young man she passed off for her son, but who should this son prove to be, but the very Lord S—we had spurned."

"You make me tremble," said Ellifon, "what miracle could save you?"

"Why, I, myself I," said Hannah, "by tampering with the boatman, who got us safe, I assure you, on board a sloop of war; and who but we, for the Captain fell instantly in love with my mistress."

Ellifon clapped his hand upon his sword, and half drew it out of the scabbard—Hannah screamed murder, and the people of the house ran in to see what was the cause. "There are but two things upon earth that I greatly fear," said Hannah, "and they are a ghost and a naked sword."

The Landlord laughed, and Ellifon desired the good folks would all retire.

"So then, this Captain," said Ellifon.

"You shall hear," said Hannah.

"Death and the devil," cried Ellifon, "tell me first, is he the husband of my Elfrida?"

"Why for certain," said Hannah, "travelling has turned your brain, or you would never go to *misuse* me after this manner. He was almost a married man at the time, and has since brought his Lady to visit us; but if you will not let me decorate, I cannot tell my story."

"Well, well," said Ellifon, "you are a strange woman—but go on."

"And so, finding what traps my Lord had laid for us, and Mr. Overbury not knowing whence the commission came, what does he, but slap sends it up to the war-office, because he would be honest and poor."

"Noble Overbury," said Ellifon.

"When we, for the first time discovered it was the Gentleman, for he was above boasting of his own works."

"Confusion!" cried Ellifon, "I see where this will end; so cut the matter short, and tell me at once."

"I can tell you no way but straight forwards," said Hannah, "and if that does not please you, Sir, I must even be silent, though you should scare me in fits with your horrid sword."

"Proceed," said Ellifon.

"Well

“Well then,” said Hannah, “for the truth must out, this Captain Venables--”

“I knew him in America,” said Ellison, “the Captain of the sloop you mean?”

“Yes, Sir,” said Hannah, “he was the very man that told us of your death, when, behold, Lord S— was so humbled, and so much in love, that he makes us an offer of his title and fortune.”

“And Elfrida Ellison,” exclaimed he, “is Lady S—.”

“No, not so bad as that neither, for we scorned him a second time; but now, Sir, if you will hear the rest, you must promise not to fall into a passion—and for why? because when a man’s dead he is dead—and she who is once fairly a widow, has a right to become a wife—and who shall say right is wrong? or that she who only follows reason and human nature—”

“Some enemy of my peace,” said Ellison, “has surely sent you to torment me—Away with your cursed reflections, and come to the point?”

“Why then, Sir, the Gentleman we have been talking of, your friend—Mr. Overbury’s friend—every body’s friend—did ask Mrs. Ellison to have him; but what said she? why no, until she was better informed of your being dead, though the brave Cap-

tain Venables offered to take his *davy* of it."

"Captain Venables was very busy," said Ellifon, "and perhaps I may find a time to thank him."

"What with your sword?" said Hannah, "it is a pity you ever came back, if you are come back so bloody-minded."

"Go on," said Ellifon.

"So letters," said Hannah, "were wrote to and received from America—and O, Sir, consider how it will break Elfrida's heart to find herself so cruelly deceived—she will die of grief, Mr. Ellifon, so you need not set your mind about killing her, and her father will soon follow her to the grave, and her three sweet innocent children."

Ellifon started as if he had been shot. "Children!" cried he, "my Elfrida's children! and by another husband! but I will sacrifice the invader of my bed with my own hands."

"And your Elfrida, at the same instant," said Hannah, "who is guilty? not your Elfrida. Was it her unborn children? or the worthy man that married her in open day? or is not rather yourself? whose gay living drove you abroad, left the most lovely of women to work for her bread, and who, at length, upon full proof of your death, honestly bestowed herself upon another? Is not the evil bad enough?" continued

tinued Hannah, taking advantage of Ellison's silence, "without making it worse? Do you think she is less wretched than yourself? or that he who has lost her is happier than either of you? Come, come, Sir, let me persuade you to act the part of a Christian, and be at peace with the whole world."

"You have not yet told me," said Ellison, "the name of this undoer of my family."

"For the love of Heaven," said Hannah, "do not ask me—it is the same that helped you to go abroad—that got Mr. Overbury his commission—that lived with them in Arcadia---for I forgot to tell you Mr. Clwyd has done his daughter justice at last, and given her his whole fortune, and is buried in the church, just by the spot where Captain Overbury has put up a monument to you out of respect, as he proclaims to all people, in golden letters, to your memory."

"The man's name," cried Ellison, "for I will know it, tell me his name."

"Upon my knees," said Hannah, "I intreat you not to kill me---his name is---is Wilmot."

Ellison threw himself upon the ground, and Hannah, rising hastily from her knees, retreated to a corner of the room.

He cursed himself, Elfrida, Hannah, Wilmot, tore his hair, beat himself against

the floor; and, at last, drawing his sword, he vehemently vowed he would be revenged.

Mr. Overbury, who well knew the violence of Ellison's temper, and had followed Hannah, fearful of consequences, met him in the door-way, as he was rushing out with a madman's rage.

"Behold me, Sir," said the Captain, "I am, and ought to be your first victim—you shall not find me shrink from your attack, but it is only through my heart that you shall cut your way to a man who never injured you, and who now, if I had not injured him by my rejection of him, in preference to you, Sir, that are armed for murder, would have been the poor Elfrida's happy husband."

Ellison returned into the parlor and sat down, the Captain following him, when it was discovered that Mrs. Jenkins was actually in a fainting fit—she was carried into the air and soon recovered, when, hearing Mr. Overbury was arrived, she ventured to rejoin the company, taking her seat close behind him.

"Wretched man that I am," said Mr. Overbury, "how is the latter end of my days overclouded—Your return, Mr. Ellison, has destroyed the fairest pile the hand of happiness ever raised—and yet you seem to think yourself the only aggrieved and offended party—Your misfortunes were self-derived ;

derived; I mean not to reproach, but to remind you how we, an innocent set of people patiently suffered with you—and now, that you are plunged into this abyss of woe, will you say, that your own errors are not the true and original cause of it?—and yet we shall again have our full share of sufferings, for we have lost our child, if you have lost your wife—our child the best of husbands in the distracted Wilmot, Wilmot the tenderest of women, whom he lawfully married—and three lovely infants the most exemplary of mothers; and can Mr. Ellifon resolve to spread the calamity still wider?—Will he presume to finish in blood what was begun in error, and because we have been innocently criminal, murder those whose peace he has for ever destroyed.”

“Where is Elfrida?” said Ellifon.

“On my life,” replied the Captain, “I know not—Your letter was delivered but the day before yesterday to Hannah, when she was alone—the contents threw her into agonies, and Elfrida flew to her assistance, she there met with the fatal letter, and since that hour these wretched eyes have never beheld her—of which I need not tell you, she was the delight and joy.”

“And where, Sir, for I must beg to be informed, where is Wilmot?”

“ At Arcadia,” replied Mr. Overbury, “ in a state of affliction even you would pity.”

Ellison paused---“ They must never meet again,” said he.

“ Insult not my worthy child so far,” said the Captain, “ as to suppose such a thing---she would not submit to a shadow of impurity, and, though her heart has ever been most upright---calls herself an adultress, and I fear for her reason.”

“ How shall I dispose of myself?” said Ellison, “ I have no home.”

“ My house shall be opened to you,” said the Captain.

“ And Wilmot there,” cried Ellison, “ his children too!—Madness! madness!”

“ They shall give place to you,” said the Captain, “ or will you reside at the Grange? that house is also mine.”

Ellison was for some time silent---“ Be it so,” at length, said he, “ the Grange-house shall be my abode whilst I remain in England ---but hear me, Sir, and hear me without resentment---the frenzy of an husband must not be sported with---Elfrida was, she is---she shall be mine---and Wilmot, must not dare, even in thought, to claim her.”

“ How different,” said Mr. Overbury, “ is your character and Wilmot’s---he compassionates even you, and loves Elfrida much too well---”

“ If

“ If you would have me calm,” said Ellifon, “ tell me not of *his* love for *my* Elfrida---I will try to conquer, or at least regulate my feelings---but the bare mention of Wilmot’s love of Elfrida Ellifon, will always be a whirlwind to my soul.

“ Mrs. Venables, the wife of your friend,” said Mr. Overbury, “ is now at the Grange, she will receive you, and do every polite and friendly office by you.”

Hannah now stole off, and mounting a horse, soon related all these particulars at Arcadia, when Wilmot consoled himself that his Elfrida was out of this furious man’s reach.

The children, by Mrs. Overbury’s appointment, were stationed in the back wing of Arcadia-house, that they might not cross Mr. Ellifon’s walks, and Wilmot took up his residence in the next apartment to their’s.

Ellifon, after a short time, having got the better of his baneful displeasure, had a strange curiosity to see the infants, and inform himself if they were like Elfrida.

He, therefore, one morning slipped up the back-stairs, and, tapping at the door, was desired to come in by Hannah, who had a table before her, at which Overbury and Venables were standing upon two little stools, building houses with cards, and the little Elfrida upon her lap, blowing them down---the door opened and in walked Ellifon.

Hannah

Hannah was terrified. "You have mistaken the room, Sir," said she, "do, pray, be so good as to leave us--the Lord keep every body, what, Sir, can have brought you here?"

"A desire to see these little ones," said Ellifon, "so do not fright them, Mrs. Jenkins, or teach them to curse me. What is your name, my dear?" said he to the eldest.

"Overbury Wilmot," said the child, "is not that a good name, Sir, for a little boy?"

Ellifon made no reply, but put the same question to the second.

"Venables," replied the child, "and I will be a sailor."

"And how have they named the girl?" said Ellifon to Hannah.

"Elfrida," replied Overbury, "after mama—and she is half as handsome, and one quarter as good. Do you know our mama, Sir?"

Ellifon could not answer.

"If you did," said the boy, "you would love her dearly—every body loves her, and so they do papa."

Ellifon was softened by the first part of this little speech almost to tears, but was hardened by the conclusion into the power of asking questions.

"And

"And pray what are you to be?" said he to Overbury.

"What I am, Sir," said the boy, "a soldier, in Captain Overbury's regiment, and, if you will lend me your sword, you shall see me exercise."

"Never touch a sword," my dear," said Hannah.

"Never be a coward, my dear," said Ellison, "I know this foolish woman cannot bear the sight of a piece of steel—but come with me into another room, and I will teach you to flourish it."

"You shall not go, Master Overbury," said Hannah, "I believe, Sir, you wish to kill me."

The child had got Ellison by the hand, and was pulling him away not to mind her.

"You shall not go into another room—if the sword must be flourished, I will hide my eyes, and he shall do it here."

Ellison drew his sword, and the delighted boy danced round him, whilst Hannah with her eyes, and Elfrida's face, covered with her apron, dropped down upon one knee, and besought every good and gentle spirit to protect her.

"And will you play so every day," said Overbury, "do, and I will so love you—and Venables here shall learn to look at a sword, without being ready to cry, as you
see

see he now is, and to touch it too as I do. Don't I touch it, Sir," said he, putting one of his little fingers boldly upon it.

"I shall raise the house, Master Overbury," said the trembling Hannah, "if I hear you talk at this rate, and bring up all your papas."

"Well, and if you do," said the child, "I don't mind it, for little boys must learn to be brave, must not they, Sir—and will you come to us again—and don't take notice of her—though I love her too."

Ellison shook him by the hand—"I shudder," said he, "whilst I admire these children, were they but mine, my heart would be softened into the likeness of their mother, and we should be happy."

"You may let me see Elfrida, Mrs. Jenkins," said he, having put up his sword, "the flourish is over—I will look at the child."

Elfrida kissed her hand to him, as she was taught to salute strangers—was pleased with the buttons of his coat, and played with his watch-chain, whilst he was tracing the mother's features in her infant countenance.

"My Elfrida's eyes," said he, "are somewhat darker, but their sweetness and sensibility are here—Elfrida's smile too—heavenly children! I have chased your mother from you, but your hearts are at ease,
and

and blessed your situation. I will see them again, so soon as I can bear a second interview with them—and, Mrs. Jenkins, as you wish peace to your own soul, teach not these harmless innocents to curse me.”

Hannah turned her head aside and heaved a deep sigh.

“Nay, mark me, woman,” cried he, “if you do, and the dead have power to torment the living, whenever the grave receives me, I will haunt you, and reproach you,” saying which he left her.

“Mercy on me,” said Hannah, “what a man!”

“I am sure he is very good-natured,” said Overbury, “and he has got a nice sword, and so sharp! I warrant you—How Venables looked when I touched it! did not you Venables? and could have cried—but you are not so old as me you know, and so are afraid.”

Wilmot, who had been wrapped in thought, had not heard a word of all that passed, though only in the next chamber, now opened the door to ask how they all did.

“What is the matter,” said he, “Mrs. Jenkins? you look ill.”

“Only frightened by the Gentleman, Sir,” said Overbury.

“What Gentleman does the child mean?”

“Ellison, Sir,” said Hannah.

“Has

“Has he seen the children?—I hope they behaved well to him.”

“I said I would love him!” replied Overbury, “and I am sure he loves me; and he said Elfrida was like mama; and I saw tears in his eyes; and he wished we were his little children, didn’t he, Mrs. Jenkins? and he said he would come again.”

“Unhappy man!” said Wilmot, “what distress has his return brought upon us, without one ray of comfort to himself!—I charge you all to behave well to him whenever you see him. Unfortunate man, what misery has he not been the author of to my Elfrida!”

A NEW CHARACTER.

Elfrida and her friends arrived in London; Captain Venables had done his utmost to entertain her—pointed out every beautiful object to her observation in their journey, and when no longer able to keep her mind from recurring to melancholy thoughts, he enlarged upon the situation to which she must have been reduced by the success of Lord S——’s schemes—whereas her sorrows were now the offspring of virtue, and her tears of innocent regret.

“Happiness such as she had enjoyed, was,” he said, “in the scale of human existence, always

always high taxed, and of course, as great had been her felicity, the contrast she now experienced was dreadful—but that there was a little company, whose lives were bound up in her's, and those the persons most dear to her on earth---that her father and mother would be happy, comparatively speaking, if they could once hear she was composed---that one of the best of men (here she wept abundantly) must find his resignation in her fortitude---that the unfortunate author of all this calamity would be driven to despair, if any fatal consequences were born of it---and, above all the rest, Heaven demanded her patient acquiescence with its, however severely, trying will."

Elfrida felt the full force of these arguments, and promised they should have weight with her—"I will endeavor," said she, "to live for all their sakes, and particularly for the soul's sake of him who is at once the injurer and the injured."

Captain Venables provided comfortable lodgings for them, in the house with tender and well principled people.

"The Lady," said he to them, "chooses to be alone—she is one of the best women in the world---the distress of mind she now labors under is upon a relation's account---serve her, therefore, with silent respect---do not appear to see she is unhappy---obey all her commands without taking upon you to judge

judge for her---provide better for her than her engagement may authorize--- and I will pay all her extra bills with thankfulness---she is the beloved friend of my wife, who will soon be in town to devote her whole time to her."

"I think, Madam," said Captain Venables, on breakfasting with Elfrida, the morning after her arrival, "you are too good to let this young lady suffer by being your companion---I have, therefore, taken the liberty to hire her a harpsichord, which will be sent in a few hours, with proper books of entertainment; and I have borrowed some elegant drawings for her to copy, and will furnish her with the necessary materials---and I have, moreover, a favor to beg of her, which, if you will be so kind as to give her a little of your assistance, she will be able to grant me---Mrs. Venables, you must know, has long wished to be mistress of a painted gown, a soft-colored silk, and a light, genteel pattern"

"Excellent friend---benevolent-minded Venables," said Elfrida, "employment is, you need not tell me, the best antidote for grief, and you shall not prescribe in vain---provide us with materials, and you shall have the pleasure to see us apply to business."

Mr. Venables wrote an account of all these particulars to Arcadia, and entreated his wife
to

to come up, but she could not leave Ellison without exciting suspicion, and, perhaps, leading to a fatal discovery of Elfrida's place of retreat.

The Captain had a relation, a woman of a certain age and a widow, who, from the goodness of her heart, and the quickness of her understanding, was a treasure to all her acquaintance—he called upon her—related Elfrida's misfortunes and merits, and bespoke her compassion and friendship.

"I will introduce you," said he, "immediately, and you must exert your best powers, until Mrs. Venables can come up to share your humane task—She is, my dear Madam, an ornament to her sex, and an honor to human nature—we must not, therefore, let her become an angel in heaven, until we can better spare her, by finding her counterpart upon earth."

"I wish," said this kind and indefatigable Gentleman to Elfrida, "I wish you would give me leave to introduce a distant relation of mine to visit you—she has a sigh for every distress, and a tear for every sorrow—yet so far does her benevolence surpass her sensibility, that I have often, when her heart has been bleeding, seen her face wear a smile—the smile of soft consolation and animating hope, and, all unmindful of herself, pouring balm into every wound—and she will tell you that there is nothing wonderful or
hard

hard to perform in her conduct—for that she learned the whole lesson, that obedience was better than sacrifice, from Shakespear, where he says (having allowed nature to feel the strokes of severe fortune)

But to persist in obstinate condolment, betrays a will most uncorrect to Heaven.

She will however shew you her sentiments, and have delight in chearing you, if you consent to receive her—I have already prepared her to love and esteem you.”

“And to pity me, I hope, Sir,” said Elfrida, “for what losses have I not to lament—my father, mother, husband, children—children, Captain Venables, endeared to me by—and yet I must not call them mine.”

“Hear Mrs. James’ opinion,” said he, “of your situation, she is an able casuist—with all your putity of heart, Elfrida, she has the experience of twice your age—her ideas are so just, and her judgment so competent, that she can lead you through this labyrinth of woe—clear your understanding from painful mistakes, and teach you to draw a line between the world’s conclusions and moral rectitude, the world’s laws, and the conduct which the Deity sanctifies, and reason must approve, for however dangerously for our peace we may refine, it is the *intention* that will color the deed, nor shall we ever be conceived answerable for circumstances,

stances, where the heart is found to be right, and that we sin not a moment beyond conviction."

"O bring her to me," said Elfrida, "if she is mistress of the sovereign power to heal a wounded spirit, I greatly want her."

"She can," said the Captain, "even in the strong words of her favorite poet,

—*Min'ster to a mind diseas'd,*

Pluck from the mem'ry a rooted sorrow,

Raze out the written traces of the brain;

and to bring her talents to proof, she shall breakfast with you to-morrow morning."

Captain Venables gave directions that when Elfrida was spoke to, she should always be called Madam, and when spoken of, the Lady, without ever hearing a name pronounced to which she had been accustomed, except that of Elfrida.

Ella took the Captain aside, and told him that her dear Mrs. Wilmot would frequently retire to her closet and weep.

"Sacred be her retirements," said the Captain, "if she weeps I have hopes of her—for 'tis the grief that whispersto the o'er-charged heart to break in silence that is to be dreaded. Never, my sweet girl, interrupt her while her eyes bespeak her softened sorrows."

Mrs. James, after all the fine things she had heard of Elfrida, was astonished to behold her.

This

"This Lady was singularly happy in the choice of her subjects, and now soothed, now interested, and now revived her. "Best of friends," said Elfrida to the Captain, "what a cordial you have brought me—Your description of your relation appeared romantic, but she does what she pleases with the passions—her powers are more than human—I did not think there was such a woman upon earth."

"How unspeakably happy," said the Captain, "will it make my Letitia, to hear you are in such good company. It was surely a white hour, when I became your knight-errant, and rescued you from the hands of giants."

"Ah, Sir, those were days!" said Elfrida.

"Of danger and distress," returned the Captain, "for my part I fancied you were irrecoverably gone—and then that excellent creature, your servant."

"Ella, my love," said Elfrida, "whose thought was it to send Hannah back?"

"My own, indeed, Madam," replied the good girl, "from first to last."

"It was inspiration," said Elfrida, "and never will I forget the tender obligation you have conferred upon me—it is such a rest for my wearied heart to recollect that she is with my dearest friends, and to feel you are here."

"Every

“ Every thing will dispose itself,” said the Captain, “ I trust, for your accommodation, as far as it is possible for you to be accommodated ; but while your friends are making their little offerings to you, you are the absolute architect of all the happiness your dearest friends, as you justly call them, can enjoy—and, only for a moment, be your mind sensible of the effect it will produce, when I can tell them their Elfrida reposes upon the pillow of innocence—that their Elfrida can make distinctions between the dispensations of Providence and the self-deserved misfortune—that their Elfrida supports the greatest of human distresses with resignation, and annexes not the punishment of guilt, by an impatience of temper, to the sorrows of innocence.”

“ You may,” said Elfrida, “ tell them these efficacious things even now, for I will be what I ought to be.”

The Captain entreated Ella to help him to pen, ink and paper, wrote this most consolatory letter on the spot, which was signed by Elfrida herself, and the reader may guess with what sensations it was received.

Elison was now fallen into a sullen and contemplative humor, and, walking whole hours alone, would say to himself, “ Had these children been mine, I should have known happiness.”

Hannah

Hannah was desired by the family to throw herself in his way, in one of his gloomy and retired walks, and try to discover the cause of them. She accordingly took him by surprize, at an angle, where it was impossible to escape her.

"You appear much disordered, Sir," said she.

"Upon the borders of distraction, Mrs. Jenkins," said he, "those children cut me to the soul. Wilmot's children by my Elfrida---I could put him to death in an agony of despair. Had these children been mine---"

"If they were," said Hannah abruptly, "you would love them no better than you did the little sweet boy and girl we brought up with so much care and tenderness."

"My boy and girl! Mrs. Jenkins."

"Yes," returned Hannah, "the same; for though, when you left England, you had so much nature as to recommend them to Mrs. Overbury's care, you have never named them since your return, though they are your own flesh and blood; and then fancy, if you were the father of other people's children, you should be a mere dotard."

"I am shocked," said he, "at my want of remembrance of them; are they living? Where are they situated? Can I see them?"

"Now

"Now that is so like you, Sir," said Hannah, "to ask fifty questions in a breath, and all before the quickest mortal can answer one of them—but come, Mr. Ellison, shall I tell you, for I can, all about them?"

"Do, do, Mrs. Jenkins," said he, "I believe I ought to behave better to you, for you are certainly a good woman, though my mortal enemy, and the never-failing friend of my Elfrida."

"Well then you shall hear," said Hannah, and with all the pathos of descriptive powers she was mistress of, she gave him an account of Wilmot's meeting with them, and knowing they were his, protecting them, selling his watch, &c. to provide for them, leaving them by letter, in case of his death, to the care of Mrs. Overbury—until, to his utter astonishment, he discovered that the little children he was so offended Captain and Mrs. Overbury caressed, and which he attempted to insinuate were the spurious offspring of Wilmot, were the innocent infants he had abandoned.

"I recollect them," said he, "with shame and self-condemnation, Mrs. Jenkins, I recollect them—What an unfeeling wretch I have been—no wonder Elfrida flies me with horror—but my friendly and honest woman, (Hannah could scarcely credit her own ears) are they living?"

“Living,” said Hannah, “aye, I warrant you; and there is not finer children, and, what is still better, there is not more deserving children in the twelve counties.”

“You will quite change my heart, Mrs. Jenkins,” said Ellifson, “if you talk in this manner, for I shall feel the parent, and learn to pity even Wilmot.”

“Gracious and worthy sentiments! O cherish them,” said Hannah, “for you little know how they will bless and cheer you.”

“But where are they?” said Ellifson, “what are their names?”

“The boy, Sir,” said Hannah, “was christened Frederic, after his father, and the girl Ella, after Mrs. Overbury, their mother by adoption; and she has, and still loves them as tenderly as she is beloved by them, for the children almost adore her, and so for sure they ought.”

“But you do not tell me where they are; you have, Mrs. Jenkins,” said Ellifson, “a way of trifling with my suspense, and delaying your information, that distresses me.”

“And you, Sir,” said Hannah, “with reverence though, as you are a Gentleman, I speak it, have a way of flap-dashing out your questions so fast, that I am puzzled what and when to reply.”

“Where

"Where are the children? tell me that before you proceed—and what is become of their unfortunate mother. I fear the sin of her seduction—"

"I wonder she never appeared to you," said Hannah, "I am certain, I would have come out of my grave, if I had been *mis-*used by the greatest man upon earth, in any such like manner."

"So far I am answered then, it seems," said Ellifon, "the poor young woman is dead—and, once again, where are the children?"

"Master Frederic is gone to the East Indies," said Hannah, "his second voyage, at his own request, and much against Mr. Overbury's inclination, as you will read in that letter."

To Mr. OVERBURY.

"It pains me," wrote the boy, "my dearest, best of friends, that I am this second time embarking for India, with only your reluctant consent—but Mr. Wilmot, by his kind introduction of me to his numerous friends, for all who know Mr. Wilmot have particular ties to him, rendered a sea-life so delightful to me, that I should not have been happy if you had denied my going."

“ Besides, Sir, for I will open my whole heart to you, I am now a big boy, and begin to make very serious reflections—The story of my birth mortifies me unspeakably—I have no father, and every mention of that endearing name cuts me to the heart.

“ O that I could have seen the parent of my existence; the one, I mean, that from the world’s customs could behold me without a blush, (for the grave alone, I find, could cover the confusion of the other, or set her free from persecution and reproach) how would I have knelt to him, wept, and entreated him to accept my duty and my love—would have told him (which is the truth) that Heaven had given me a child’s heart, though the law of the land would not allow me to have a father—imploring him, instead of punishing me for the misfortune of my birth, to heal the sorrows that misfortune occasioned me—from finding myself an alien in society, an outcast as it were from creation—without father, mother, sister or brother—and, O strange to tell, in the opinion of two-thirds of those who call themselves the sons and daughters of humanity, are deemed the living monument of transgression, instead of their helpless, unoffending and most cruelly injured fellow-creatures.

“ I could never ask you the question when I was with you, but pray have the goodness,
when

when you write to me, to teach me to understand these things, and wherefore it can be just to nick-name an innocent infant, and insult its misery by calling it a bastard, making it to bear about the disgrace of a crime, by which the God of justice and of mercy permitted it to be born.

“Several difficult sciences, my dear Sir, by dint of study, are open to my comprehension---but the mysteries of human life, and human manners, are dark and inexplicable—could a key to them be bought with money, I would make a dozen voyages to the East, if necessary, with pleasure, to be able to purchase it. I will, however, at this time trouble you no further, but, having written myself into a melancholy humor, take leave to conclude for the present,—my guardian, my more than father—for your kind care and liberal instruction have made me all I am, or can hope to be,

“Your Frederic, &c. &c.

“*B. S.* Teach Ella to love me, for, let the laws say what they will, she is my sister; and, should my father—but I forget he is dead, and that I must reconcile myself to dying unacknowledged, and unblest, by the paternal voice.”

Ellison was touched even to tears—“I will atone,” said he, “Mrs. Jenkins, I will

atone—this fierceness of temper shall be conquered—I will no longer wish to see Wilmot deprived of his beautiful offspring—I will no more wish—but where is Ella?”

“Ah, Sir,” said Hannah, “what affecting stories am I called upon to relate!—Miss Ella ever doated upon, upon---” repeated she and stared.

“My Elfrida, I suppose you would say,” returned Ellison.

“Yes, I believe so,” said Hannah, “but I felt, I cannot tell how---to find I had lived (the more’s the pity) not to know what name to give my most beloved mistress.”

“She is, ever was, and ever shall be Mrs. Ellison,” said he.

Hannah shook her head---she, however, got over this ugly point pretty decently---related Ella’s running after the chaise very interestingly, and concluded with telling him she was with Elfrida.

“Heaven, I thank you,” exclaimed Ellison, “now I will be calm---the companion of my Elfrida—my child, Ella—the companion and friend of my wife—I am now satisfied—the tempest is laid in my breast—nor will I interrupt the peace of angels—she does not then curse me—hate me—or she must be more than woman to suffer my acknowledged offspring to live with her.”

“Well, now, Mr. Ellison,” said Hannah, “I hope you see how much you have to be thankful

thankful for—the families are, as Mr. Overbury calls it, blended together, and the Supreme Being the father of them all.”

“I am obliged to you, Mrs. Jenkins,” said Ellison, “much obliged to you for this morning’s conversation, and shall be glad, from time to time, to talk with you—You are singular, but you are good—You know my cause for sorrow, and, though you may hate me, your humanity must pity me,”

Poor Mr. Wilmot, however, so far from deriving a cure for his griefs, from the lenient hand of time, found them increase upon him with redoubled violence—Ellison in the neighborhood, Elfrida in London, and every avenue shut up, of restoring her to her home, her parents and her children, he resolved to make an opening, and set Ellison the example of going abroad. “It is,” said he, “no less vain than impious to war with Heaven—Elfrida, wife of my plighted faith, of my tenderest affections, I have lost you for ever—but every thing I can do ought to be done, to promote your convenience—My reason is almost shaken by despair—I have no resource but in flight, and, if Ellison’s jealous nature does but prompt him (as I verily believe it will) to follow me, wherever I go, to assure himself I am miserable, you may return to the parental roof.”

Having

Having settled every thing for his departure, Ellifon could not forbear relapsing, "He means, my heart tells me," cried he, "to see Elfrida before he goes—but I will perish first."

It was to no purpose that Mr. Overbury set before him the fixed principles, and undeviating purity of his daughter's heart.

"They shall not meet again on earth," said Ellifon, "and there need not be a worse hell prepared for me, than to see them meet in heaven."

Wilmot was told of these things by Hannah, who was alarmed for his personal safety; "He will butcher you," cried she, "and your Elfrida will die of the wound you receive from his hand."

"Fear him not," said Wilmot, "to a temper like his, these are torturing strokes—I will speak to him, and endeavor to restore him to composure."

"You speak to him!" said Hannah, "I am all over in a trembling at the very thought of such a thing—Mind what I say, Mr. Wilmot, come not within his reach, if you would live out half your days, for he will stab you, when you are least aware of him, to the heart."

"I see him," said Wilmot, "in the north walk, and will speak to him."

"On my knees," said Hannah, holding him, "on my knees, I beseech you not to be

be so presumptuous—you are a dead a man if you come within arm's length of him."

Wilmot gently, but resolutely disengaged himself from her, and crossed over to meet Ellifon, who stopped, but seemed doubtful whether he should or should not avoid him.

"Mr. Ellifon," said Wilmot, "in the chain of unforeseen and inevitable events, you and I are fellow-sufferers in the same cause. What have you lost, Sir, that I have not lost? or is there a pang your heart has felt, that has not been equalled by mine?"

Ellifon was silent.

"For my part, Sir, I can no longer bear my situation," said Wilmot, "absence and employment may do much—I am determined, at least, to try their power, and, as I have no plan but getting as far as possible out of myself, I have no choice of destination.

"You, Sir, I find, have alarms respecting me, which, if you could look into my soul, would totally subside—I never more shall see the unhappy Elfrida—You know how I obtained her. I never, even in thought, wronged you—and, as a proof what I can do, in compassion, in indulgence of your, however wild, and of me unworthy, feelings, I find there is a ship, now at Bristol, bound for America—you, yourself, if you please, shall see me on board, shall see me sail, never

ver, in all probability, to return to England again."

Ellison looked agreeably surprized. "And can you, Sir? will you do this, for the peace-sake of a man, who is unable to learn either your confidence in human promises, or your resignation to the will of Heaven?"

"I palpably find my disposition aggravates every evil that falls upon me---but we do not make ourselves, Mr. Wilmot, and a deformed mind, I take to be as much a birth-right unhappiness, as a deformed person."

"I beg your pardon," said Wilmot, "for, though powerless in the last instance, we are free agents in the first, and can soften, regulate, bend, restrain. However, Sir, not to dwell upon a painful subject, I have only to entreat that you will keep my intention of going to America a secret—for, from being the present theatre of war and bloodshed, I know my friends will be much happier to suppose me gone to the East—but I am unfitted for business, unfitted for company, and must wander at large, or mix with the labors of the moment—it is not for a mind, deranged as mine is, to draw out straight lines of conduct. Three days hence I will call upon you to attend me."

Ellison was gratified to an high degree by this concession of Wilmot, and enjoyed the idea of his absence—"If he dies," said he,

he, "Elfrida may be mine—may—she must—she shall—she is—for our marriage was never invalidated."

With this pious thought he soothed himself, and seemed to lose a considerable share of his own in Wilmot's augmented distress; his heart smote him with recollected obligations to this most worthy, and most unfortunate man—but in his case obligations were slender ties—he had been robbed by him of Elfrida—she had been, for eight years, his wife—and this innocent outrage could alone be atoned, in his opinion, by an human sacrifice—the sacrifice of the man she loved.

Wilmot was punctual—he parted with amazing fortitude from his children and his friends—"They are yours" said he to Captain and Mrs. Overbury—"humanity and nature will bind you to them—I leave them to your care, nor will you forget our Elfrida."

The wind was fair—he embarked, Ellison standing on the shore, until he could no longer perceive the ship, when, with a lightened spirit, and composed countenance, he returned to the Grange.

A RESTO-

A RESTORATION.

Elfrida was so far recovered of a fever, which hung about her, as to be able to take an airing, attended by her constant friends and companions, Captain Venables and Mrs. James, who, after a day spent in exertions to amuse her, left her with their full reward, if they had been so happy as to call forth one smile.

She was told of Wilmot's embarkation—she sighed, but made no reply—after a long pause—"Was Mr. Ellison," said she, "to follow his example, would it be improper, think you, my good friends, for me to wish to end my days under the parental roof."

"Quite the contrary,;" replied Mrs. James, who, it was evident by the Captain's looks, spoke his sentiments also.

"We will think of it, then," said she, "at some future period—All-merciful Heaven (her eyes and hands uplifted) touch the heart of thy most afflicted creature, the fugitive Wilmot, into peace."

Ellison now made it his request to see Ella, and Hannah wrote to inform Elfrida, "I will part with her," said she, "with pleasure, upon such an occasion."

“ And

“ And I,” said Mrs. James, “ will endeavor to supply her place—but you must accept of my residence in exchange for her’s—her little bed will accommodate me.”

“ You are all goodness,” said Elfrida, “ but how shall we get the dear girl down?”

“ O, Madam, dearest Madam,” said Ella, “ do not send me—I cannot see him—he will not love me—nor is it kindness that makes him ask for me—if he was kind, he would let me stay with you and be happy.”

“ Ella, my good girl,” said Elfrida, “ you must not entertain these illiberal notions of so near a relation as your own father—Hannah has, I perceived, poisoned your infant mind with unjust prejudices—Mr. Ellison has many virtues, and tenderness for you will, I dare believe, be one of them—You know we often take dislikes (which is very wrong) to people, and then suffer ourselves to behold, through a false medium, all their merits, because they may have some faults—This undutiful motion of your heart, Mrs. Jenkins, is much to blame for having excited, and you must subdue it.”

Ella wept and looked at Mrs. James her genuine feelings—for fear, however, of either offending, or making Elfrida unhappy, she said she was ready to go, and would
take

take care not to disgrace her instructions.

It was settled that Mrs. James' servant should accompany her to Bristol, and to write to Hannah to bring her thence.

Ella wept the whole night, and was pale as death when, after many delays, she presented herself at breakfast—Elfrida would not seem aware of her distress; and, all things being prepared, the agitated girl, all regret and apprehension set off.

Ellison was not made acquainted with the day of her expected arrival, but Hannah had a commission to meet her, and conduct her to Arcadia.

“How is my dear Lady?” said Hannah.

Ella could not answer her for tears, but hung about her neck, and at last said, “I would rather die than see him—he has done nothing for me but fright and distress me—O Mrs. Jenkins, how can I see him?”

“Aye, Lord help you, my poor child,” said Hannah, “your’s is a bitter task—I would not have him for my father for all the world—but one must not say a word against what our worthy friends think right, though, between you and I, they often carry their high notions so far, that to a plain woman, like myself, it appears next door to actual madness—he hates me as if I was a noxious thing—yet I never did him other hurt in my life, than now and then telling him his faults

faults—but for all that every one is against me, and even Mr. Wilmot blamed me because I would say white was white and black black, having none of these feelings and allowances, as they are called, for people I cannot love. But come take courage,” said she, “if you behave well I suppose you will be sent back to London, for he much approves of your being with—O how cutting, Miss Ella, that such a woman as Captain Overbury’s daughter, should live to have no name one can say is her own—and, since her sorrows are so deep, who shall take upon them to declare, they will not drink of these waters?”

Ella dried up her tears, and promised to do her best to recommend herself. “But I hope,” said she, “Mrs. Jenkins, there will be no harm in my wishing him to go abroad, or I fear I shall be very guilty, for I cannot help thinking it is more fit he should have left England than good Mr. Wilmot.”

Ella, finding the parlor-door open, ran to embrace Mrs. Overbury with, even filial, affection, and then the Captain—when, turning herself towards the window, she, for the first time, perceived there was a third person in the room, and that third person, from description, she doubted not was Ellison.

She approached him with awe, with down-cast eyes, with agitation, and kneeling—

“You

"You are, Sir, I believe," said she, "you are my father."

Ellison blessed her, raised her, kissed her; told her she was a pleasing girl, and that he was glad to see her.

She longed to seat herself by Mrs. Overbury, and to talk of Elfrida, but she was afraid of offending, and keeping the chair her father had given her, was awkward, uneasy and silent.

"Our friends in London," said Ellison, with quickness, how did you leave them?

She blushed and hesitated.

"Are they well," said he, "my dear?"

"Not very well," said the distressed girl, "weak, and low, and—(almost broken-hearted, she was going to say, but recollecting the command she had received, not to give pain to Mr. and Mrs. Overbury) yet contented," said she, "quite contented, for she is with tender friends."

"Contented!" said Ellison, his color rising, "I am glad of it—I wish I could follow so good an example—but it is my misfortune to be quite the reverse—for the dæmon of discontent possesses my whole soul."

Ella started.

"How old are you?" said Ellison.

"Almost fourteen, Sir," said Ella.

"Had

"Had you been only four years of that number," returned he, "you would have soothed me—Wilmot's children are cherubs."

Ella could not refrain from tears—"It is—it is not my fault," said she, "Sir, that you did not know me when I was an infant—I was an infant once, Sir, and would have loved you as I do Mr. and Mrs. Overbury, if you had been pleased to let me—it is not my fault."

"I know it—I know it," said Ellison, somewhat impatiently, "but if this is your way of comforting the afflicted, to get into the pout—I have gained little by our meeting—but, perhaps," said he, smoothing his brow, "we shall be better acquainted."

Mrs. Overbury's kind heart ached for the poor girl—barbarous, it almost called him, but there was no interfering.

When Ellison had finished his coffee, he got up—"Meet me, Ella," said he, "ten minutes hence, upon the terrace," and withdrew.

Ella looked fearfully around, and, finding he did not return, she pressed Mrs. Overbury's hand, and said, "I shall die, Madam, I must die, if my father is to torment me thus."

The Captain and his wife said every comforting and supporting thing to her—bid her remember that Mr. Ellison had met with
misfortunes

misfortunes sufficient to alter the best temper; and, finally, that it was her duty to pity and obey him.

With measured step and slow, she reached the terrace—Ellison smiled upon her—held out his hand to her, which she prettily enough kissed, and he was touched by her manner.

“You have caught something of my Elfrida,” said he, “in the winning, the enchanting stile—may you never, like her, be unfortunate.”

Ella sighed.

“But come,” said he, “you shall not always find me a melancholy companion, we will talk chearfully, friendly together, so tell me where you live in London, and how you spend your time?”

“Ah, Sir,” said Ella, looking earnestly at him, “can you wish to know?”

“Tell me all,” said he.

“Why then, Sir,” said Ella, “we work and weep, and walk and sigh, and sit down to table, often without eating, and weep again, and so to bed, for we do not always sleep there.”

“How does Elfrida mention me?” said he.

“Always with respect,” replied Ella, “and frequently with compassion.”

“Where learned you to flatter, child,” said Ellison, with a pleased countenance.

“If

"If truth can flatter," said Ella.

"And how does she speak of Wilmot?" demanded he.

"With tears," said she.

"Now, now," cried he, "I acquit you of design; for, however high your first accounts lifted me, you have levelled me with the lowest, by this cruel conclusion; I have her compassion, Wilmot her heart."

They were silent.

"Where does Elfrida live?" said he.

Ella turned pale.

"I will know, where she lives," cried he, furiously, "so tell me this instant.

The poor girl fell upon her knees. "You may kill me, Sir," said she, "if it is your pleasure, I will not resist—but from me you shall never know this secret—you would not surely teach your child to be unfaithful—is that a lesson for a father—and here, I solemnly declare, Sir, that were you to honor me with any trust, I would disdain all bribes, despise all punishment, nay, lose my life to hold it sacred."

"Rise," said he, "I will not be above confessing myself corrected by you. You will, I find, in every thing but person, be a second Elfrida."

They walked some time in silence.

"I have a painful jealousy of mind," said he, "and must apprehend I do not embrace a friend in my own child.—You were brought

sincere, perhaps, if I was to tell you how happy I should be to entertain you."

"You would soon find the way to my heart," said Ellifson, "if we were to be much together—but I will be cheated of my affections no more—Love for love shall, henceforth, be my motto. You may inform Mrs. Overbury that I intend to go abroad, and that I wish to restore her Elfrida to her, and you along with her—and I desire you will sometimes remember me with kindness and gratitude, for this step of banishing myself will be purely to promote her and your happiness.

Ella made her best curtsy, and, not being forbidden, tripped away to Arcadia-house, and reported all that had passed between her and her father.

"I must not hope," said Mrs. Overbury, "for the sweet consolation of my Elfrida's company; it is too much for me to hope for."

Hannah asked Miss Ella how her father had behaved to her.

"Much better," she replied, "than she could have expected."

"He is an hypocrite," said Hannah, "and can be what he pleases, and I can only advise you, Miss Ella, to be upon your guard."

"He is my father," replied the girl spiritedly, "and, as such, I will teach myself

to

to revere him; he is not accountable to me, though I am to him."

"I am glad," said Hannah, "he has made you so dutiful—but there is witchcraft and enchantment in all he does and says, and I wish you may never repent your good opinion of him—he never could, nor ever shall impose upon me."

Ellison now informed Captain Overbury of the sum he had brought with him from America, which, he said, he supposed would be given to Ella and her brother, if he returned no more—his Elfrida—

"You must be sensible," said Mr. Overbury, "our child will not want a provision, while we have the power of providing for her—and Mr. Cluwyd has enabled us to do much more than she will ever stand in need of—Besides, Sir," added the Captain, "if it be your resolution to leave England, you know not what you yourself may have occasion for, and you will do well to guard your inconvenience at all points."

"I shall never be happy more," said Ellison, "but remain a miserable wanderer over the face of the globe—and yet, Sir, the laws of my country would have restored Elfrida to my claims."

"Talk not of laws," said Mr. Overbury, "our Elfrida lives to her own heart, and would be buried quick in the earth, rather than, knowingly, be an adulteress."

"I see

“ I see you are all against me,” said Ellifon, “ and support her in her very peculiar notions—there is, therefore, nothing for me but banishment and wretchedness. You would not treat Wilmot thus.”

“ How!” said Mrs. Overbury, “ is he not gone before you? Was not our house as open to you as to him? But, excuse me, Sir, if I mention, that the difference between him and you is, his tender concern for the peace, and honor, and the delicacy of our child, has always prevented our wishes—whereas you—”

“ Well, Madam, I grant you, he was born to have the advantage of me in every thing.

“ True,” said Mrs. Overbury, “ even in misery.”

“ But then, Madam,” says Ellifon, “ has he not soothings which I am denied? Does he not possess my Elfrida’s heart? Is not your approbation, your preference his? But we will talk no more of it—I wish Frederic had not gone to India—I think he would have been attached to me.”

Hannah prayed day and night for Ellifon’s departure—and even taught the little children to join with her—a circumstance which Overbury was so unfortunate as to let out, in one of his conversations with Ellifon.

“ I

"If you had seen mama," said he, "take leave of us, it would have grieved you sorely, she knelt down, Sir, between Venables and me, and said she should never see us more—but I hope to see her for all that, and soon too, and so does Mrs. Jenkins—and she has made a prayer for it, and Venables and I hold up our hands together thus, while she says it, and then, just for all the world like the Clerk at church, we cry, Amen."

"What a bitter, what a rancorous woman, she is," said Ellifon, "to poison even the minds of these infants against me—I shall soon be surrounded by a whole host of enemies—but I will leave her, Elfrida, every one, either dear or odious to me, in a few days, and try what peace is to be found for me beyond the Atlantic."

Ella," said Ellifon, the next morning after breakfast, "attend me in my study."

"Here," said he, presenting her a sheet of paper and a pen, "write a letter for me."

"A letter, Sir! said Ella, to whom pray?"

"To Elfrida, from yourself, child; so don't take fright, and be so forward, as I can perceive you are to contradict and oppose me—begin it in your own way, and I will dictate what is to follow."

"Dear and honored Madam,

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"I am commanded, by my father, to address you."

She read it to him by his order.

"You have not called me father?" said he.

"I have, indeed, Sir," said Ella.

He looked over the paper and kissed her.

"You cannot surely hate me then," said he, "and, if you do not, it is one happy exception to the general rule."

"What shall I say next, Sir,"

"It will be better, I believe," said Ellison, "for me to write you a copy, which was as follows.

"My father commands me to inform you, that for your sake he is, at length, come to a determination to go abroad—and hopes you will then return to your dear father and mother, who deserve to enjoy the blessing of your company, for his sole motive for leaving England is to give you a tender proof of his affection for you, which every one avowedly doubts.

"He begs you will recollect the privileges he has waved—the legal and incontrovertible privileges he possesses, in common with the rest of mankind, under the British constitution, of claiming a *wife*, however situated, and of compelling her to reside with him, however reluctant—but that, as you deny your heart, he scorns to take your person by violence—there is, however, one request, which he thinks you cannot be disinclined

clined to grant him—and that, my dear Madam is, to let him know, through my means, whether you will, or will not, re-unite yourself to those whom you love, when his departure gives you a convenient and desirable opportunity, for it would be soothing to him to know you as happy as your condition admits of.

“He laments every uneasiness he has caused you, adores you both body and mind, and will never attempt to appear before you again, whilst Mr. Wilmot lives—but should he be the survivor, shall expect that his conduct during the present period will, even in your opinion, entitle him to something more than common gratitude.

“His tender, his ardent wishes for your composure and health will ever await you, &c. &c.”

When Ella had transcribed this letter, her father, having run his eye over it to see it was perfect, he bid her fold it up, and seal it—she unhesitatingly obeyed—he then rang for a servant to take it to the post-house—she had not yet directed it she said.

He held the ink-stand for her—she drew back—“Permit me, Sir,” said she, all terrified, “to write the superscription at Arcadia-house.”

“Suspicious huffy,” he called her, “who had been her preceptress, Mrs. Jenkins?”

Ella blushed and even burst into tears.

He waved his hand haughtily and indignantly, for her to leave him—and, such was the effect of his treatment upon her heart, that, having gained the outside of the door, she left all her distress behind her, and flew to Mrs. Overbury, saying, “O, my dear Madam, help me out of this sad dilemma, direct and send off this letter to your Elfrida; the contents will not disturb her, though written by my father’s command, and I have incurred his displeasure, by refusing to put the address to it in his presence.”

“Amiable girl,” said Mrs Overbury, embracing her, “how abundantly do you repay our friendly care, and fulfil every wish of our heart—our Elfrida herself shall thank you for your sensible and generous caution.”

Ellison now seemed relieved—Wilmot’s children and Hannah were ordered to avoid him, and he never once mentioned them to any one.

Elfrida could not refuse complying with so inoffensive, and, in some respects, obliging a request; she, therefore, returned a speedy answer to Ella, and told her, “Gratitude was a susceptibility which still remained with her, and, therefore, there was not a single individual, who meant her a kindness, however mistaken the mode of conferring it, that her heart did not thank, of course it would be extra-

extraordinary of acts of *indulgence* had not their weight with her.

“That if Ella’s father did quit the kingdom, she should conceive Mr. Overbury’s house the properest place of residence for her—but that, after the distresses she had known, so trifling a thing as situation could not much annoy her—that she was sorry for every sigh, which the melancholy vicissitudes of her life had occasioned him—but that she must take the liberty of saying, that fatal chances having deprived her of the honors of a wife, she had too much spirit, not to say principle, to submit to the tyranny of an husband, and that the world was too large a place for a desperate woman to fear meeting with an asylum in her hour of need; but that she was nevertheless, thankful for not having been compelled to fly to extremities—which, though they would effectually protect her person, would, in a severe degree, augment the anguish of her mind.

“That she always had believed, and was still of the same opinion, that the best means of insuring our happiness, sooner or later, was to promote the happiness of others, for that benevolence and generosity were their own reward.

“That she wished Mr. Ellison that tranquillity, in another section of the globe, which his union with her had deprived him of in England, and begged he would, as heretofore,

heretofore, continue to pity her misfortunes, and spare her feelings, for he knew she was innocent of every intention of ill."

This letter was by no means agreeable to Ellison—"He did not expect," he said, "to have had his power defied, or his self-denial contemned—that it was poor encouragement for a young convert (as it was plain he was considered) to sin no more, to let him know he had out-lived every possibility of acquiring reputation—that Elfrida abused his good-nature, and provoked her destiny, but that he would rise superior to his sex, and, instead of asserting his rights, and making himself feared, as he could not make himself loved, he would remove from a country, where his presence was felt as a bar, and his absence prayed for."

Ella was broken-hearted to hear her dear, dear Elfrida mentioned in such harsh terms; she durst not however, speak her dissatisfaction, and, in order to soften the asperities of her father's temper—had the good sense so to conduct herself, as to be in high favor.

At length the happy day arrived, which was, as Ellison sarcastically said, to free Arcadia from the dreadful monster which had so long infested it; when Hannah stole to a window, to feast her eyes with seeing him depart, lifting all the children up to have

have a last sight of him, bidding them clap their hands for joy, as they would now soon see their mama again.

Ellison stayed but one night in London, and, proceeding to Portsmouth, embarked in a packet-sloop for New-York, complimenting himself upon his lenity, his forbearance, his most heroic resolution.

But Ellison, even in the act of quitting England, was only true to his character. He knew it was within the chapter of possibility, that either the climate or the service in which Wilmot was engaged, might shorten his existence, and, that though the world, while both husbands were understood to be living, would protect Elfrida in her resolution of flying him, and, after her example, call every attempt to constrain her an outrage, he vowed by every power, both celestial and infernal, that if he survived him, no earthly exertions should hold her at a distance from him; and, upon these principles did he renew his travels, the principles of discontent, of revenge, and rancor in his heart.

Elfrida, as soon as it was certain he had failed, was conducted, by Mrs. James and Captain Venables, to Arcadia.

She was beyond all expectation composed—behaved to her father and mother as if only returned from a common absence,

and paid the Captain the tenderest attention.

“ Generous Elfrida,” said he, “ best of daughters, I penetrate your benevolent motives of action—you would reconcile me to myself—you would extract the sting of disappointment; you would bind up the wounds which my heart has received—and may the angel of peace and good-will towards men recompense you.”

She seated herself between her father and mother—took a hand of each—smiled—and appeared to forget her woes in the consolation they received from her restoration to them—and asked for Hannah.

Hannah presented herself, attended by the children—her spirits sunk on beholding them, and she fainted—being recovered, she returned their endearing caresses—but acknowledged it was too much for her—“ I shall grow used to my happiness,” said she, “ but this sudden flow is too rapid for me—it oppresses, more than it delights—so, my good Hannah, take them away.”

She resumed her composure as soon as they were withdrawn.

“ Do not, my love,” said Mrs. Overbury, “ strain your powers—moderate this goodness, for I see it will destroy you.”

Ella and Mrs. Venables came from the Grange the moment they heard of her arrival—and never, perhaps, was one woman
more

more indebted to another, than Elfrida to this lady, for the weeks she had spent in her service,

The gloomy, thankless, and frequently turbulent Ellison, though her guest, had felt himself so much at home as to consult nothing but his own humor—the ties of politeness and of sociality were hourly broke through by him, and, as to gratitude, it was a virtue he scarcely knew by name, in his own composition, though he exacted it, with a rigid hand, from every individual, who was so unfortunate as to incur the shadow of an obligation to him.

Nevertheless, this kind Mrs. Venables had been indefatigable in stemming the torrent of his petulance and ill-nature; what she could she concealed, and what transpired was sure to receive some softening from her—no wonder, then, that thus delivered, she rejoiced to behold Elfrida restored to Arcadia, and her friendly congratulations were warm and abundant, and we need not say what were Ella's feelings upon the occasion.

“Mrs. Jenkins,” said Elfrida, “as she assisted her to undress—I hope you do not let poor Mr. Wilmot be forgotten by his children—talk of him often to them, my dear woman—teach them to emulate his goodness—I would bid you guard them against his misfortunes, but that prescience is not an human talent—but, above all

things, let them pray for him—You must, however, never name him when I am present—nor could I bear to hear his name from them, so weak is my resignation.”

Elfrida, from the force of habit, and a piety, which dwelt not upon her lips, acquired all the outward signs of tranquillity—“Wilmot’s children,” she said, “it was an act of friendship to educate, and an act of humanity to superintend in his absence—but she was greatly disordered, when any circumstance pointed out their mother.

“They have no mother, Hannah, let them call me the Lady—for it would not be proper they should say Elfrida—Mrs. Overbury’s daughter, their friend.”

She would neither receive nor pay visits, beyond Mrs. Venables’ family and their relations—Hannah, Ella, and the children, in the morning, and her father, mother and, their Grange neighbors, in the evening, were her sole companions.

There was a rude kind of paddock at the side-front of Arcadia-house, which, in her days of happiness, she had never thought of entering; some high trees surrounded it, and totally shut in its prospects, the interior part of which spot she had cleared of underwood, and every other incumbrance, and opened and improved to her own fancy.

Here

Here she spent great part of her morning—a murmuring brook, which at once excited and soothed her melancholy—the plaintive nightingale, and some rooks, were all the sounds she was perceived to listen to—She had a little, plain box, something in the stile of a dairy-house, erected, to shelter them from rain, or too intense heat.

She would walk now quick, now pensive, unless when she thought herself observed—and her person, though still elegant, was astonishingly altered—a circumstance, into which she never enquired, for she always turned her head aside when she passed a looking-glass, and Mrs. Overbury performed the daily office of putting on her cap, for, in this particular, she could not trust to Hannah, who never would have thought her too airy, as she called it, or too fine.

Thus lived Elfrida, in the bloom of years (for she was not eight-and-twenty) the innocent victim of sorrow, and the uncomplaining daughter of grief.

Hannah shed tears for her regularly twice or thrice in the four-and-twenty hours—though she had quite ceased to weep for herself—and Mr. and Mrs. Overbury beheld her as a once-beautiful flower, which, having drooped its time, must fall and die.

From a scene of bliss, Arcadia was (as if by fatal magic) changed into a scene of seriousness—

riousness—for, except the children, who were encouraged to play, and were insensible of their mother's situation, there was not a gay heart under Mr. Overbury's roof, for even the servants were affected by what they saw, and a sympathy that did honor to their feelings, prevailed through the whole family.

NEW WONDERS.

Ellifon arrived safe at New-York, but his utmost enquiries after Wilmot were vain—and, such a self-tormentor was he that he began to entertain apprehensions he had at last left him behind him in England—"Should I discover," he would say, in some of his furious soliloquies, "that he has deceived me, nothing but his heart's-blood shall appease my resentment."

In a cooler moment it, however, occurred to him, that he had changed his name to prevent his being known; and that, perhaps, his eager pursuit might be the very cause of his not finding him, for, it was even probable he would wish to conceal himself from him. From New-York he went to Philadelphia, but with the same ill-success, Wilmot was wholly unknown, and his search fruitless.

Ellifon

Ellison having announced himself for a friend of Captain Venables, had soon a very numerous acquaintance, and received an invitation from his Commanding Officer (for he had now, a second time, entered a volunteer) to spend a day, with a large party, at his quarters.

One room was not able to contain the guests, so that tables were prepared in three several apartments, and a Serjeant, as a kind of Master of the Ceremonies, was appointed to communicate the toasts throughout the assembly.

Many loyal healths had been drank—their patrons, commanders, and fire-sides, when the master of the feast called for a favorite lady from each—a woman of honor—setting the example.

The glass had been circulated for some time, and Ellison was rather heated, when the toast-proclaiming Serjeant entered from one of the other rooms, and said, “Elfrida Wilmot.”

Ellison in an agony of rage, jumped up, and, drawing his sword, swore he would sacrifice the man that dared to prophane *his* Elfrida's name, by joining it with that of Wilmot—for, that the Lady was a woman of beauty, rank, honor, and fortune, and his wife.

The company were amazed—and, whilst they prevented his passing them, in quest (as
was

was his desire) of the offender, endeavored to persuade him there must be a mistake; and, as Elfrida was a Christian name—they apparently thought it unreasonable to monopolize it, and Wilmot and Ellison, a sufficient discrimination of the individual.

Ellison was wound up by this opposition, and, as he felt it, ridicule, to a frenzy—said every abusive and defamatory thing of Wilmot, and elevated his voice in such a degree, that every word he uttered was distinctly heard by the whole company.

The commander was provoked to enquire into the business, from being disturbed—as one of the parties, he said, must be a villain, he begged to have it cleared up, whether it was the accused or the accuser.

Wilmot now stood forth, and modestly, though spiritedly, affirmed, that neither of them deserved that epithet, for that they were only two Gentlemen made wretched by a domestic misfortune, and intitled to universal commiseration.

The enflamed Commander was not to be so easily appeased—Ellison he thought he knew, and his suspicions fell totally upon Wilmot, and, to cut the matter short, and restore conviviality, he ordered him to be put under an arrest till morning.

The matter now began to wear a very formidable aspect—Wilmot's friend insisted upon sharing his fate, though a man of rank
and

and consequence, and would pledge his life, he said, that he would be found both a Gentleman, and an honorable character---and parties seemed to be forming in favor of each disputant---when Ellifon, having from his violence produced an effect that restored him, in some degree, to his senses, confessed his fault, and pleaded a wounded mind, and a natural impetuosity of temper, in excuse for his conduct.

This rencounter having, however, unfitted these Gentlemen for the evening's mirth, that they might not interrupt those who were in a proper temper for enjoyment, they shook hands, and retired to Wilmot's lodgings.

"You are a glorious fellow," said Ellifon, "courage and coolness, Mr. Wilmot, are a very uncommon union."

"Your conduct," said Wilmot, "is noble, humane, and benevolent, for you have given happiness to the deserving; let, then, our common misfortune, convert us into friends."

Wilmot, whose heart was sincerity itself, was delighted to hear that Elfrida was restored (as he was assured she would be) by the absence of Ellifon, to her father and mother, to her home, to his beloved children—and relieved from every apprehended persecution---and he honored the man, who, by withdrawing himself, had done this, as if
he

he had laid him under a personal obligation.

Wilmot related the little incidents through which he had passed since his crossing the Atlantic.

“His passage,” he said; “was a dangerous one---but his private distress not only rendered him insensible to his own concern, in this public calamity, but of great benefit to those who beheld the approach of death with terror and dismay.”

“When landed,” he said, “he could scarcely command his feelings so far as to mix with society---some cavern, some forlorn and unfrequented spot, seemed alone to promise him consolation—But he had just the resolution to ask his heart—wherefore?—and discovered, to sooth his despair—not to aid his resignation—guilt, indeed, might avoid the haunts of men, and, by a life of austerity and solitude, seek to expiate past offences—but the sufferings of innocence are entitled to every softening, every mitigation, social life, and social converse can communicate.”

“He then repaired to a rendezvous, and offered himself a volunteer against the natural foes of his native country, and had been engaged in several skirmishes, but was never in a regular battle—he had assisted in comforting the wounded, burying the dead, and defending the dying from outrage.”

“The

“The carnage of war,” said Wilmot, “seems to be the convulsion of nature—To behold beings, not only of the same form, but of the same religion, climate, family, slaughtering each other, to gratify the wild passions of ambition, anger, and pride, is an absolute alienation of both benevolence and reason—to see what devastation the rude hand of death is permitted to make in the peace of mankind, by rending asunder every soft, gentle, and endearing tie, and leaving widows, orphans, and childless parents, to people the world, and to deluge it with tears—yet such are the miseries which the annals of blood and desolation record—such are the agonizing woes, by which our best victories are purchased—and such events are what supply our public prints with those articles of intelligence that light up the politician’s face with smiles of exultation; and give gladness to what is called the loyal heart—and yet we bestow the pompous epithets of good and great upon our actions, which thus leave an indelible stain upon our humanity.”

Preparation was now making for an attack, and Wilmot, from the pique which Ellifon’s Commanding Officer had conceived against him, was marked for one of the first detachment that was to sit down before the fort, and it is uncertain, and ever must remain so, whether it was, or was not, in this unsuspecting

unsuspecting hour of friendship, with the knowledge and concurrence of Ellifon; be this as it may, the undertaking was of so desperate a nature, that those concerned in the first onset, were, by every probable calculation, to fall to a man.

Ellifon, who knew the temper of Wilmot, went to him, however, the day before, and offered to change posts with him—"You are," said he, "the beloved of *our* Elfrida—you have three beautiful children—it is hinted to me the situation of the advanced battery will be big with danger, and what has a man, without friends, to lose, but a painful existence?"

"I will confess all my sins to you," continued he, "and make you understand my motives of conduct—There is a sternness, a fierceness, in my mind, that shuts the door of every heart against me—whilst you, Wilmot, from your gentleness and goodness, are universally esteemed."

"When I came to this country my purpose was a savage one—I thought it would relieve me to assassinate you—and, that knowing you dead, I would compel Elfrida to be mine—there was much of the fiend in my ideas.

Wilmot shuddered to hear him.

"But Heaven and your merit, has touched, has changed my soul—its pulsations, at this moment, are mild as my Elfrida's—and I think

think it would be blessed to embalm my memory, by your friendly regrets—and live in my children's, my Elfrida's affections, by your favorable report of my last transaction."

"Be assured," said the honest, credulous, liberal Wilmot, "if ever it rests upon me to report your conduct, I will do you justice—but it is more than probable that one of us may fall."

"And will not Elfrida," said Ellifson,—"justly belong to the survivor?"

"Legally, Mr. Ellifson; nay, equitably, she may; according to the common received opinions of the world—but *our* court of equity must be that amiable woman's heart—nor ought we to wish to appeal from its decision."

"You, Sir," said Ellifson, are a happy man, and talk at your ease upon this occasion—but, as I am determined to claim my wife, if you should die before me—if you, for *her* sake, would kindly endeavor to reconcile her inclination to her duty, by making it your last request—

"Name it not, Sir, I would not for a thousand worlds hang a single bias upon her heart."

"Then consent to change stations with me, and let me die."

"Never for me, Sir—let what fate may attend me, I will not stain my principles,
wound

wound my conscience, or buy my lengthened days at a dishonorable price. The drum beats, Sir, and I will not affect to deny, that as the drum calls me to almost certain dissolution, it has to me a solemn sound—but death is the business of life, and must be performed with resolution and integrity, upon whatever alarming ground—Farewell.”

“Yet still consider,” said Ellifon, “and refuse not to save your Elfrida—for I fear there is no safety for her while I walk this earth—a whole sleepless night’s deliberation brought me to you—my offer is sincere—I cannot unmake myself—and, in my present shape of body and of mind, I cannot give happiness to a single being—rid the world of a nuisance, and my breast of its tormentors—a bullet will settle all.”

“You are a wonderful man,” said Wilmot, “and possess a great mind; had you but been taught in your infancy to regulate your passions, you would have both known and communicated felicity; if I ever do behold Elfrida more, I will remember your this day’s conduct towards me—but know, I could, though I was to escape all the perils of battle, never behold her more, if I was capable of preserving myself by your proposed means—I must submit to all the threatening chances of my profession. The drum beats again, so
once

once more farewell—farewell—perhaps for ever.”

“ Yet, O yet, once more,” said Wilmot, with great emotion, “ let me, Mr. Ellison, conjure you to be generous and just to Elfrida—disturb not her tranquillity if you should return, spare her gentle spirits, respect her feelings—in pity to her past sufferings respect them—and my soul, with its last consciousness, shall bless you.”

“ This fellow,” said Ellison, as he went back to join his corps, “ would have made a most excellent Methodist Parson—for he can whine with any he that was ever most celebrated for whining—yet has sterling courage, which is a singular contradiction to the rules of human composition.”

Wilmot, though he had some military duty to perform, was still master of a few moments—they were to make their attack under cover of the night—and for this short respite he was thankful—those precious moments should be his Elfrida’s—he, therefore, eagerly applied himself to his pen, and wrote as follows :

“ I have now, my ever-revered and most tenderly beloved Elfrida, the awful prospect of sudden dissolution before my eyes—for, the service I am on the point of being dispatched upon, is expected to prove, in the first instance, a sacrifice.

“ I rush

“ I rush not upon it from a wilful impatience to terminate my disappointments, for it has happened, believe me, in the natural and due course of the duties in which I am engaged; but thus situated, I must cast back one anxious look to your safety.

“ I have seen Mr. Ellison—have formed an intimacy with him—and even persuade myself he entertains a friendship for me—for he has, in a noble manner, within these five minutes, solicited me to exchange appointments with him, from apprehending mine to be most dangerous—but Heaven and my Elfrida would have abhorred my conduct, if I had been capable of taking advantage of his generosity or his desperation—my life, so preserved, would be the death at once of my principles and my fame.

“ Elfrida, no—I may be wretched, but I will not be despicable—nor, be my situation what it may, will I depart from the line of conduct which an honest man ought to hold sacred.

“ Forgive me, Ellison, if I wrong you—but your goodness seems rather starts, than any settled dictates of the mind—Should I then fall, and Mr. Ellison return, do not let him deceive you into an opinion that I, but for a moment, encouraged him to hope to be re-united to you—I think, Elfrida—gentlest, and best of women, I think—your heart, that knows the sentiments of mine,

mine, will supply all I would say—It is not partiality, it is not prejudice---it is the conviction that he was never formed to sooth your sorrows---Had he, like me, been the friend of your infancy---had he, like me, been the husband of your tenderness---had he, like me, possessed the same turn of temper---my Elfrida would never have been plunged into the distress in which I left her---for he would have thought it piety to continue you in your innocent deception---and sought a place to die in, where you could never have known he had lived beyond the period of your becoming the wife of another---for this I declare, upon the word of a man, now tottering on the verge of eternity, this I would have done to have preserved your peace.

“I, nevertheless, pity him—forgive him, and charge the contraction of his vices, and the obscurity of his virtues, upon a wrong education.

“Elfrida, my dear children, my father, mother, my friends—farewell—if this letter reaches your hands—lovely and most beloved sufferer—my first, my last, my only object of tender attachment—my greatest bliss, and greatest source of affliction—for ever, ever farewell.

“Your own Wilmot.”

This

This letter Wilmot left with a Gentleman in whom he could confide, to be transmitted to England if he fell in battle. At the distance of an hour he was obliged to be upon the wing—in deep silence they advanced—the signal was preparing for attack—when a deserter came over, and instructed the leader of the detachment to carry the fort without losing a single man---they followed his advice, made and entered a breach by surprize---and, when Ellison's party came up, instead of slaughter and desolation, they found the English colors flying, and the garrison at peace.

The troops were remanded, with the prisoners under convoy---and Wilmot remained for three days in the fort---when news arrived that there had been a smart engagement.

Wilmot was alarmed, and, obtaining leave, set off, with rapidity, for the vacated field---where he found them burying the dead, and bearing off the wounded; amongst the number of the latter he soon discovered Ellison.

“Deliver him to me,” said Wilmot, “I will take care of him”---In his arms he brought him into the fort, laid him on his bed, and, finding him weak from loss of blood, tore his shirt from his own shoulders, to stop his wound, until he could get help for him.

Wilmot

Wilmot was beloved wherever he came. A skilful and humane Surgeon attended, and soon discovered that Ellifon's chief danger was from a flight of arrows, shot by an ambuscade of Indians, after the troops had separated, one of which, poisoned, as he apprehended, had penetrated his side.

When Ellifon was able to speak---“Think you, Wilmot,” said he, “that I shall not, henceforth, be a real convert to virtue--not one good action, my friend, but bears its reward in its hand---had you accepted the offer I made you, the death which is now inevitable for me, would have been your's---but carry my remains to England, for Elfrida will not believe even your report, if my bones are left in a foreign land.”

Wilmot was almost distracted---“True,” said he, “Elfrida having been once so fatally mistaken, will require even stronger testimony than you mention, before she believes again---live, then, my dear Sir, live---let me attend you to our native country---be nothing remembered by us but offices of friendship---O live, and let us both expire in England.”

Wilmot became Ellifon's nurse---and a cessation of hostilities enabled him to devote his whole time to him—he bore with his petulancies—enlivened his gloom—smoothed his pillow—presented his medicines, and

supported him whilst his wounds were dressed.

It appeared to him most unlikely that Ellifon should recover—but the Surgeon informed him he might be years in dying.

“Every possible antidote,” said he, “has been administered—every means essayed to preserve him—but, if his blood is tainted (which I verily believe to be the case) the whole mass will, though by slow degrees, perhaps, become corrupted, and he will go off as one in a deep decline.”

The Surgeon’s account composed the agitation of Wilmot’s spirits—“If I ask not too much, All-gracious Author of my existence,” said he, “let me convey this unhappy man to the village of his nativity, and grant him there to depart, in the midst of those, whose sufferings his life has occasioned, and whose hearts can alone know tranquillity by his decease—grant me this, and of my own destiny, I will not have one anxious thought.”

Ellifon grew better—his fever left him—his wounds healed, and he belived himself restored.

“I shall recover my health and strength,” said he, “perfectly in England—Can you, Wilmot, have the goodness to promote my return, and consent to cross the Atlantic with me?”

“I will

"I will make it my delight," said Wilmot, "there is, I have just been told, a ship, bound to Bristol, about to sail—let us not, then, delay our embarkation—and, be assured, we will never part, but at your own request."

Wilmot was, during their voyage, the nurse, and supporting friend of Ellison—he complained of inward spasms, of disagreeable tastes in his mouth, and of unaccustomed sicknesses, and would then suddenly lose them all, and fancy himself quite well.

All these symptoms were observed with alarm by Wilmot, fearful lest his dissolution should come on before they reached Arcadia; but, to his unspeakable satisfaction, they were at length set safe on shore at the Ferry-house, where Wilmot resolved to take leave of him, having first dispatched a messenger to inform Mr. Overbury he was arrived.

Wilmot was so altered by grief, and his appearance from the most Gentleman-like, was so neglected and unfavorable, that no creature knew him—It was settled that Ellison should write him an account how he found their friends—and, at some convenient opportunity, relate the incident of their meeting in America—the friendship that had taken place between them, and their returning together—and, with proper preparation, at last let them know that he was in London,

—and quitting the Ferry-house and Ellifon, with every confidence in his honor and truth, he began his journey to that great city.

BROKEN PROMISES.

Frederic was returned from India, and was almost broken-hearted to behold the change in his much-loved friends.

He spent whole days in caressing Wilmot's children, and praying for his safety—would tell Mrs. Jenkins he should never be happy, unless he saw him again."

"Ah, poor, dear, honored Gentleman," said Hannah, "who knows what is come of him?—he is, perhaps, eat up by the *fishes*, or devoured by wild beasts—I am sure I have a fine time of it—always expecting a message from the grave from some one or other—but indeed, Mr. Frederic, I now almost begin to think it is with ghosts, as Mr. Overbury says, and, that the good, so soon as they die, are made sensible, every thing on earth is as it should be, and so are not so presumptuous as to wish to interfere with the workings of Providence; and, that the wicked, Master Frederic, have not the power to come and torment their fellow-creatures; or, mercy upon us, I should surely have seen your father, that is, if he should

should be gone to his long home—he did so love to distress and terrify one.”

Mr. Overbury sent to speak with Frederic.

“My dear youth,” said he, “here is a task cut out for you—your father is returned—ill, he tells me—and begs he may have leave to die in the Grange-house. I need not instruct you how to behave to him—I will break the news tenderly upon my wife and child—you will take the chaise and bring him home.”

The young Gentleman enquired at the Ferry-house, and soon found his father.

“I wait upon you, Sir,” said he, “by Mr. Overbury’s command—your house is ready to receive you, and I will, with your permission, conduct you there.”

“And pray, Sir, who are you?” said Ellison, viewing the agreeable youth from head to foot, though without the remotest presentiment of his person.

“My name, Sir,” said the youth, “is Frederic—and, if it offends you not (kneeling both respectfully and gracefully before him) Mr. Ellison’s son.

Ellison embraced him—“This is grateful to me,” said he—“I have heard much of your merits, and now let me see how you will behave to your unfortunate father.”

Frederic obeyed his motion to take his seat by him.

“Does Elfrida live?” said Ellifon.

“She does,” returned Frederic.

“Mrs. Overbury, Mr. Overbury?”

“Are well, Sir.”

“Your sister?”

“Is at Arcadia.”

“Wilmot’s children?”

“All finely grown, and as good as they are beautiful.”

“Mrs. Jenkins?”

“Is with them still, Sir.”

This set his mind on edge—“And still, I suppose, my bitter enemy.”

“She does not appear capable,” said Frederic, “of wishing, much less of doing, ill to any one.”

Ellifon’s color rose.

“You will please to recollect, Sir, it would ill become me, to see, or at least to mention, her faults, for I have great obligations to her.”

This *at least* struck very pleasingly upon Ellifon’s ear, for it seemed to imply a concession in her disfavor—“Well distinguished,” said he, “but I who have suffered from her ill tongue, have a right to condemn her—she taught your sister to fear me, which was the next thing to hating me, and Wilmot’s infants to pray for my departure from Arcadia—I have not forgot her malicious favors.”

Ellifon,

Ellison, so long as he kept his seat, appeared quite well—but, when he attempted to rise, a kind of spasm, he wished to forget, gave him the stoop of a man advanced in years.

“Did you ever hear me mentioned in my absence?” said Ellison.

“Often, Sir,” replied Frederic.

“With kindness?” said Ellison.

“Ever,” returned Frederic.

“Do not lie, young Gentleman,” said Ellison.

“I scorn to speak falsely,” said the youth, “I have had too good an education to descend to such meanness.”

“And Wilmot?” said Ellison.

“Sir!” said the youth, and was distressed.

“Give me a prompt, not an artful answer,” cried Ellison, “was not Wilmot the frequent subject of conversation at Arcadia?”

“With Mr. and Mrs. Overbury,” said Frederic, “but I never heard Elfrida mention him.”

“And who taught you, Sir,” said Ellison, sternly, “to call Mrs. Ellison Elfrida?”

“Mr. Overbury, Sir.”

“What then she scorns her husband’s name,” said Ellison. “You stare, young Gentleman—speak your opinion of my ques-

tion—I ask it of you, and will not be offended at it.”

“Her children’s name is Wilmot, Sir,” said Frederic.

“And, therefore,” said Ellison, his eyes darting resentment, “when you do not call her Elfrida (and you have presumed to do so in my presence) you dare to call her Wilmot—but I will be calm,” said he, “that woman, that Jenkins, is a bitter thorn in my side—she is the scourge of my existence—she is a devil in an human shape, let loose upon me—but I will not distress you—I will not terrify you—Is the chaise ready?”

Poor Frederic, having never seen any thing of the kind before, was seized with a tremor, which he could not conceal—he offered his arm to his father.

“How is this?” said Ellison, “am I so terrible to shake your frame thus?—Is it fear or disgust?”

They seated themselves in the chaise.

“There was a time,” said Ellison, “that a journey to Arcadia would have filled my heart with delight—but now where am I going?—to a desert?—a worse than desert—for the brute creation would not shun me—and who will come near me in an human form?”

“All your friends, Sir,” said Frederic.

“What

"What, Elfrida?" said Ellifon.

The youth was silent--and this strange man fell into a train of gloomy reflections.

"This finished dissembler," said he, mentally, "this smooth-tongued Wilmot, has duped me at last—he well knew nothing could restore him to the arms of Elfrida, but my dying before her eyes—he thinks I bear the seeds of death about me—but he may be mistaken—These circumstances are not the gloomy visions of my brain—but facts—insulting, provoking, unpardonable facts—but I may yet be even with him—in the first place he shall sound his own praise himself—I will not be the infatuated fool his trumpeter—no, he shall be dead for me—for I will never say I have seen him."

And thus, folded up in dark and dishonest schemes, did he continue, until the carriage stopped at the Grange; and, on his alighting, he had a galling memento of his declining condition.

Mrs. Overbury received the news of Ellifon's being returned, which his note described him to be, as a merciful remembrance of Heaven—"If we once see him numbered with the dead," said she, "our sorrows and our apprehensions will be buried with him—

L 5

I know

I know the first distress of my Elfrida's heart is the dread of his return."

Elfrida was silent for a few moments, then calmly said, "The will of Heaven must be done---nor have I one lesson to learn."

Ella wept when she was told she must attend her father. "If my behavior is sinful," said she to Hannah, "he must answer for it, not me, for he has frightened all tenderness for him from my heart; but between ourselves, Mrs. Jenkins, I do not think, if I have no right to claim his protection, that he ought to reproach me, if I have no great love for him; for, if he is nothing to me, pray what am I honestly to him?"

"His slave," said Hannah, "as he would have every one to be, for he is a tyrant by nature---however, if he is come home sick I forgive him---if he has not the *power*, why then he will do us no mischief, but his *will* will expire only with his last breath."

Ella went to the Grange---he kissed her, and told her she was now quite a woman.

But, feeling his health very indifferent, he could not forbear indulging his peevish humor.

"I suppose,"

"I suppose," said he, "you will count the days, till the happy one arrives that will separate us for ever---tell me, Ella, was there not joy in Arcadia, at the bare idea of my being come home to die?"

"I thought, Sir," said Ella, "you had long since known the hearts of all your friends; humane, pity-feeling hearts, touched by every distress which comes to their knowledge, and which tenderly draws the curtains, and smooths the pillow of even a dying stranger---O, Sir, you know not the minds of those whom you thus cruelly suspect of unkindness."

"Very well, Ella," said Ellison, "the old story I find---I am always wrong and others always right---and yet the man that will be left to die alone, under the roof he was born in, is the true and lawful husband of Elfrida Overbury."

Ellison seemed to live only to torment his children, for whom he, nevertheless, professed a fatherly affection.

"Is not Elfrida," he would say to them, when they hoped to pass a comfortable hour with him, "impatient for my death?—does she not anticipate the joy of Wilmot's return, to disturb my ashes by his re-union with her?—Have not the children learned, from that baneful enemy of mine, Jenkins, to sing *Te Deum*, when my last breath shall
be

be known to tremble on my lips?—Come, Frederic, tell me all—it will suit the gloomy habit of my soul—I have deserved the fate I have met with—so says your's and your sister's creed."

"Alas, Sir," said the youth, "by what means can I convince you you wrong me? I behold, with deep concern, the torture you inflict upon yourself, and lament I have not the power to persuade you—"

He stopped.

"There," cried Ellifon, "I there see the true complexion of your soul—it is too honest, my boy, not to revolt at a violation of sincerity—I wish I had fallen before the mouth of a cannon—I wish I had become the prey of wild beasts—but no, 'tis better as it is—I will prepare a present for my friends—my heart shall be encased, like that of Guiscard, for Elfrida, and tell her as much—but beware, young man, beware how you condemn, my (in your opinion) horrid ideas; for I perceive you shrink into yourself at every word I utter—nay, instead of condemning, teach yourself to respect the extravagancies of a man, whom, perhaps, disappointment has driven to the borders of distraction—A man, Frederic, who, except the seduction of your mother, and unhappy turn of temper, has not another sin to charge himself with."

"Come,"

"Come," said he, "Frederic, (at a few days distance from this disagreeable interview) I hear great things of you, and need not be told you can keep the secrets the Arcadian family intrust you with—will you be equally faithful to your father? I ask no protestations—the man of honor's word is his bond—tell me, then, you will not only forbear to repeat, but to look, or to breathe, what I am going to communicate."

Frederic's feelings were all in alarm—"Every thing, Sir," said he, "but Mr. Wilmot's death, I can pledge myself to keep secret, but my grief, however silent, would betray me, if I knew he was no more."

"By Heaven," said Ellison, "I will not bear this—so mark me, young Sir, what I shall reveal to you, shall either be considered by you as a sacred deposit, or I will spurn you as you deserve—Wilmot—the Wilmot you prefer to your own father, and the friend you would find him if your unnatural preference did not prevent it, is dead, Sir—gone, Sir—the grave has had its victim, Sir, and I am spared to tell it—now leave me, and approach me, hereafter, as your conduct may entitle you, for you know the terms upon which we can ever meet again."

The

The boy's hesitation had provoked Ellifon to exceed his own intentions—he thought only, in the first instance, of startling and trying him, but he was determined to persist in this equally false and barbarous report, if Frederic let it escape him.

Three days passed, and Frederic made his appearance as usual, the fourth he came not, and Ellifon was in a fury.

Ella presented herself.

“Your guilty brother,” said Ellifon, “where does he hide himself?”

“He is ill, Sir,” replied the terrified Ella, “confined to his bed in a fever—and talks so wildly, but I must not tell you what he says.”

“Not tell me!” said Ellifon, “what mockery is this? Tell me all—I love to hear dismal stories—you girls believe them the natural food of my mind, for Jenkins’ faith and your’s is the same—What does Frederic say, that you can fancy is unfit for me to hear?”

“That you are going to kill him, Sir—that he sees you, here and there, with a sword to stab him, and this has been his talk all the night long.”

“And has he not mentioned Wilmot’s name?” said Ellifon.

“No, Sir, he speaks of no one but you.”

“I will visit him,” said Ellifon.

He

He went to the youth's apartment, suspecting this was only a trick to cover his breach of trust, but found him in a burning heat, and, though asleep, agitated almost to convulsions—He was greatly shocked.

“All leave the room,” said he, “I will, myself, watch by him.”

Frederic waked quite calm—and, lifting up his eyes, beheld his father—“Ah, Sir,” said he, “I am afraid I have told all—I know my delirium has run very high, and you are come to punish my involuntary fault.”

“No, Frederic,” said Ellison, “I am not quite the savage you take me for—you have a true sense of honor, and I am sorry I brought you to such severe proof—and yet I have given you an opportunity of recommending yourself, unspeakably, to my good opinion—nor shall you go unrewarded, for, know Wilmot is not only alive, but if you will behave well, and never mention what I shall relate to you—so soon as you are better, you shall be informed of many extraordinary things concerning him.”

Frederic pressed his father's hand—“O tell me all now, Sir—have the goodness now to tell me all, that I may be certain you are
not

not angry with me, and I will thank you to the end of my existence."

"It is a tedious history," said Ellifon, "and would be too much for your spirits—only wait till you are able to give me your company into the park, and I assure you I will conceal nothing from you."

Frederic was well presently, his disease being altogether of the mind, when, to his great astonishment, he heard all that had passed between Wilmot and Ellifon abroad, from their first rencounter to their return, in the course of which relation, Ellifon did not forget to do himself every possible honor. "And now," said he, "you shall atone my omissions, for I engaged to write to this worthy man from Arcadia, but have hitherto failed to perform---and yet, Frederic," continued he, "though I have, upon this occasion, done Wilmot justice, to shew you what a machine my heart is, when even wound to the present height of approbation of him, upon the slightest circumstance that strikes me unpleasingly, that jars ever so slightly on my brain, a reverse of sentiment instantly takes place, and I could rejoice to see him dead at my feet."

"The disclosing this secret to you will, however, relieve me---and to you I will also communicate

communicate all the variations of my soul--prepare yourself, then, to sustain the shock unmoved—for when the stormy passions prevail, you will find me outrageous---the gentle movements of my soul, render me much like what you now see."

"I had, and have the power, like a whirlwind, to wreck his peace, and, with such temptations---you, nevertheless, are witness of my conduct—learn then to honor me."

Frederic was overwhelmed with the deepest affliction for the solitary state of Wilmot—alone in a lodging—not one supporting friend—whilst Mr. Ellison was surrounded by good and benevolent spirits—how cutting these reflections must be---but they must be endured.

Captain and Mrs. Venables now returned to the Grange---they had gone up to London with Mrs. James, where the Captain had some business, but hastened back, on hearing the unwelcome visit Mr. Overbury had got, to make every thing as easy to their friends as they could.

With this addition to the family, and the very singular attentions of the Captain, Ellison seemed to recover his cheerfulness, and Frederic became more and more dejected, until, unable longer to contain himself, he asked
Mr.

Mr. Overbury's leave to elope—"I could not, Sir," said he, "live under even your temporary displeasure, or cause you the shadow of uneasiness—but I have business of consequence with one of my East-India Captains, which it will be an equal loss and distress to me not to attend—give me leave, therefore, to steal away, with only an hint to your household, that I have your sanction for my disappearance, and I will leave a note upon my father's writing-table, that I am certain will obtain me his forgiveness."

"I am happy, Sir," said Frederic, "to observe you capable of unbending a little with Captain Venables, who is, certainly both an agreeable and valuable companion, and will not fail to amuse you."

"As for me I am young, and feel an awe in your presence, which prevents my shewing to advantage—I could not stand your resentment, and dreaded your refusal of my request to visit London—I have, therefore, presumed to take the opportunity of Mr. Venables being down, to withdraw myself, and hope for your pardon. I need not mention the magnet—you know my heart, Sir—but my continuance in town shall be lengthened or contracted by your commands—no creature shall be informed of my motives for
absenting

absenting myself, unless you, yourself, be pleased to divulge them. May I conjure you to write to me, and tell me you forgive me."

Ellifon hummed this letter over with an austere air—but, as the young man had vouchsafed to make so handsome an apology, and promised to be recalled at will, he sent him a few lines of paternal remembrance, and bid him write to him.

A SHORT SCENE.

Wilmot upon his arrival at London, had got one of the waiters at Will's to procure him a lodging, to which place Frederic, accompanied by Mrs. James, who had met him by accident in the street, and learning the business he was upon, would not leave him, was directed, and immediately applied to find him.

The woman of the house was a widow, of a very decent appearance, and, having conducted them into a parlor, gave them the particulars of their friend's conduct.

She said she had been greatly alarmed, from first to last, by all she had known of the Gentleman—that he never spoke but when he was asked a question, and seldom, she believed,

believed, eat or slept—that he spent all his time in copying a picture, and always seemed desirous to hide it when she entered his apartment—that having given her five guineas to provide for him, she sent him his meals regularly, which often returned untouched—that he had a messenger for ten days, to run backwards and forwards to Will's Coffee-house, to enquire for letters for him, and appeared disappointed by not receiving any; and, upon every such disappointment, always returned, with increased ardor to his drawing—that she really believed he was (as the waiter had assured her) a very good man, and a man of fortune, but that she had not the smallest doubt of his being a madman.

Frederic was distracted to hear this account of him—"Upon earth," said he, "there is not a more valuable character, and, if his reason is overturned, I shall certainly break my heart."

"Compose yourself," said Mrs. James, "solitude and grief have fallen heavy upon him—he must be drawn out of his present condition with a nice and gentle hand—take not the least notice of his behavior, but follow him, through all his turns of humor, till we happily recall him to recollection and peace."

Mrs.

Mrs. James ordered a pretty little dinner, went and prepared a table herself in his apartment—did not seem to observe him a moment—and, placing a chair for him, seated herself at the head of the table.

She helped him, and he eat a few mouthfuls mechanically—Mrs. James changed his plate, when she thought it was cold—helped him a second time—he did not taste it.

She had every thing conveyed away in silence, and again asked the widow questions concerning him—who confessed she believed he never changed his clothes, or had entered a bed, since he left off sending to Will's for letters, which was near a fortnight, for he had been under her roof a month, all but three days, nor had his portmanteau trunk ever been opened.

Frederic wept like an infant, and Mrs. James chid him severely—"Your friend's life and reason," said she, "depend upon our rational and chearful conduct, and for Heaven's sake do not, by your ill-timed tenderness, destroy what my resolution may effect—If tears would restore him I would not spare them—but we must *act* not *lament*—it will be time enough to weep when he is lost to us for ever."

Mrs.

Mrs. James attended him again at tea—contrived to change his pocket-handkerchief for a clean one—aired him a night-cap, and he permitted her to put it on his head—shut up the shutters early, and Frederic gently undressed him and put him into a warm and comfortable bed—and Mrs. James gave him a composing draught, to recruit his spirits by inducing sleep.

“ I am resolved, Frederic, said she, “ to sit by him this night, and you shall have the couch out of the dining-room brought in, and repose yourself after the fatigue of your journey, unless I should absolutely want you.”

Every time he waked, which he frequently did, for his sleep was broken and disturbed, she offered him a tumbler of warm whey, which he sometimes took and sometimes refused, and she permitted him to do just as he pleased.

The second night she also watched over him—when, having slept three whole hours, he waked, and told her he was glad to find himself released—“ I am all spirit now, as well as you are,” said he, “ but not so good.” He slept again—and then related to her, in the language of a raised imagination, all he had passed through—“ but it is over now, I shall never suffer again.”

“ This

"This will help you, Sir," said she, giving him some more small whey, "you will be better to-morrow."

The third night he went to bed unasked, as soon as he saw some little preparations, and, on the fourth morning, perceiving Frederic in the room—"Halloo, Sir," said he, "who are you?"

"Frederic, from the East-Indies," said the youth—but, to his great mortification, Wilmot made no reply.

Mrs. James, hearing what passed, desired Frederic would help him, when he got up, to a suit of clothes she had aired for him, and a clean shirt.

He dressed himself, without being sensible of the change, and walked into the next room to breakfast.

"And pray, Madam," said he, having looked earnestly upon Mrs. James, "what relation are you to me?"

"Your friend, Sir," said she, turning her face from him to hide her tears, his manner was so plaintive and interesting.

He arose—"For me those tears," said he, "they soften, they relieve me—I had a monstrous weight here (pointing to his heart) but it lessens and lessens, who knows but I shall quite lose it?"

From that time he became collected.

Mrs.

Mrs. James desired Frederic to withdraw, till he could be properly introduced, and passed the day with him alone—he related what he had met with in America coherently—his reasons for going abroad—had a clear idea of all he had said in his wanderings, and was sensible that want of rest, food, and the disappointment of not hearing from Ellison, had made him ill.”

“But still, Madam,” said he, “I do not know you.”

“Do not distress yourself,” said Mrs. James, “your memory is yet but weak—I hope I have been serviceable to you—fatigue had overpowered you—we shall be well acquainted by-and-by.”

“I remember,” said he, “I took you for an angel.”

“And an angel I will be to you,” said she, “an angel of peace, of intelligence, of consolation—your Elfrida, Sir, (he started) is my particular acquaintance—she is well—composed.”

“Blessed, blessed words,” said he “but I must not think—we will think, Madam, to-morrow.”

“Could you bear to receive a visit from a friend,” said Mrs. James, “a young friend, from India?”

“O bring him to me,” said he.

Frederic,

Frederic, who was waiting for admission, calmly entered.

"It is," said Wilmot, "it is my Frederic, I shall be happy now—but my losses have been so great that my remembrance has been shattered—for you, Madam, I cannot still call to mind."

"Your Elfrida's Mrs. James," said she, "we were strangers, except by character, until accident brought me with this young Gentleman to your lodgings."

"I feel, I see it all now—and would give worlds to hear of all my friends, the good Mrs. Overbury, the unfortunate—the woman I have lost—the children, the dear children I left behind."

"Frederic," said Mrs. James, "is just come from them."

He embraced him—"You have seen your father then—they have sent you to me—Elfrida sent you—O, I shall now be soon myself again."

A coach came to the door, by Mrs. James' appointment, she asked him to take a ride—he readily assented—drank a glass of wine at dinner—the health of all his friends—"I am rich, Mrs. James," said he, "in friends, and the unfortunate Mr. Ellison is a man of honor."

Frederic looked at Mrs. James.

“ But you forget,” said Frederic, “ two persons, that bear you the warmest affection, my sister, Sir, and Hannah Jenkins.”

“ It was ungrateful—but I had remembrances that stood between them and my recollection—You see, my dear Frederic, how a few months can unwind the skain of human happiness—break down the strong holds of hope, and yet not destroy the individual—the lightning that blighted my felicity, spared my person—I walk erect—”

Mrs. James thought it would be better to give a new turn to his thoughts, and desired Frederic to relate the particulars of his father's arrival and subsequent conduct.

Wilmot was roused from his soft sorrow into surprize and displeasure—“ Astonishing man,” said he, “ there may be the same mixture in many others, but I never saw the opposing lines so strongly marked—he was both an honest and a friendly being in America—but how is his health?”

“ In a most fluctuating state,” replied Frederic, “ one day on the verge of the grave, and the next tolerably well—to me, indeed, he appears much worse than he seems to be aware of—but how, Sir, is it, that my father

ther finds a home at the Grange, whilst you—”

“O name it not,” said Wilmot, “the difference, I trust, is sufficiently obvious, Mr. Ellison’s great fault was always to be too tender of himself—he likes the situation, and feels not the pain which his presence occasions.”

Wilmot was become a new man in his appearance; for Frederic, every day, pinned up his hair, and made him, though unperceived by himself, at least decent; and Mrs. James persuaded him to come to her house, and was impatient to let her friends know he was alive and well—but Frederic assured her she would entail his father’s dying curse upon him—it was, therefore, resolved they should, for the present, be silent—and, in a few days after, Frederic was recalled.

The good Mrs. James had now a double task to perform—she acquitted herself to a miracle of kindness—twenty little commissions for Wilmot were invented by her—she read to him—played at cards with him—entertained him with every favorite piece of music—and they took their regular airings—nor could any improvement be greater than in his spirits and person—and he was perfectly sensible of every favor she conferred upon him, and called her a second Mrs. Overbury.

AN EXIT.

Frederic, from his short absence, could perceive the ravage his father's slow consuming disease was making in his constitution, by the change in his person.

His eyes were sunk and languid—his breath short and labored—his complexion livid, and his voice enfeebled—yet his spirits were tolerable, and he appeared to have no idea of the alteration.

He was fond of private conversations with Frederic—was shocked, he said, to hear of Wilmot's illness—but I am ill too—I believe our sufferings are pretty equal.

He would not be persuaded to make a will, or to have a physician—it was in vain they represented to him, his children would not inherit—he told them, that when he perceived himself a dying man, he would take care both of his soul and body—but, till then, he should be glad if they would permit him to judge for himself, and not put it into his childrens head to wish to strip him before he was dead.

This behavior gave great concern to Mr. and Mrs. Overbury, but beyond persuasion they

they could not advance, and by persuasion he was wholly uninfluenced.

Hannah could not bring herself to feel for him—"For her part," she said, "she knew of nothing he underwent, comparable to the mortification his living at the Grange gave her poor dear mistress—who, instead of taking a little air and exercise, as she used to do before he came down, now made a prisoner of herself, and, to her certain knowledge, had a disturbed mind both day and night—and, if it was to be one of them that must go, she hoped she should not be expected to wish it to be the innocent person he took such delight in tormenting—yet, she believed, she was as humane as another, and had as tender a heart—but what said the proverb? why, that charity must begin at home, and, moreover, that she only acted agreeable to nature—that as for his children, they were bewitched by him, and that she should know how it fared with people in the next world, whenever he went off—for, that Heaven itself, she was sure, would not be able to hold him, if he had the power to come back, in the shape of a ghost, to torment his fellow-creatures upon earth."

"Frederic," said Ellifon, one day, "I am a great sufferer, though I seldom complain, for I well know I should complain unpitied,

tell me, then, how long do you think Wilmot is likely to live?—if he was once gone, the world has so little pleasure for me, I should wish for nothing more than closing my eyes—you will, I suppose, think it an ugly picture of my heart, but the sting of death to me will be his survival—Could we but expire together, or, that I might be so far indulged, as to hear of his leading the way, it would be a requiem to my soul.”

“Mr. Wilmot is much better, Sir,” said Frederic, “for I will not deceive you—he is in the kindest hands imaginable—no care will be wanting, no means unessayed, to prolong his days, and the benevolence of his temper is of more benefit to him than medicine.”

Ellison looked curses at the poor youth, who, out of principle, said what he did, for he was anxious for him to correct a disposition of mind, so unfit for launching into eternity.

Finding himself worse, it one day came into his head, that he would have an ill-natured frolic before the carnival, as he called his death, arrived: so, sending for Mrs. Jenkins, he, as a great secret, informed her, that Wilmot was no more, and asked her if she had any message to him

him in the other world, offering to deliver it.

"I don't believe it," said she, "and so I tell you flat and plain, for no earthly reason but because you say it, and so maliciously say it—to send for a harmless woman just to try to make her miserable—and as for message," continued Hannah, "since you provoke me, you shall know it—if I was so wretched as to be returned this moment from burying him, Mr. Ellison is not the person I would make my messenger, and for why? because I am certain Mr. Wilmot and he will never go to the same place—(and away flounced Hannah) nor will I go home and make all the good people unhappy," said she, opening the door to tell him so, "as I know you would have me do—and so you may find some other tale-bearer for Hannah Jenkins."

Ellison, disappointed, and, as he called it, insulted in his last moments, in order to punish Hannah, told Captain Venables that Elfrida would soon be a widow in the fullest sense of the word—for that she would bury both her husbands.

This humor, however, went off, and he behaved for some time with great decency, but could not bring himself to own that Wilmot was living.

Frederic wrote to Mrs. James to inform her how very ill his father was, and for instructions how to conduct himself respecting Wilmot, in case of his death.

Mrs. James and Wilmot held a council upon the occasion, the result of which was, that Frederic was forbid to reveal his knowledge of him until after his father's actual decease, when Mrs. James would draw Wilmot to Bath, for she thought the waters would be of great service to him, as he was, by no means, so well as she could wish, and she concluded that when arrived so near, they could acquaint him with their pleasure as circumstances might authorize—Frederic was, therefore, resolved, for fear of doing harm, to be profoundly silent, until he received orders.

Mr. Ellifon, finding himself change suddenly one morning, sent nine miles for an Attorney to make his will, and was impatient to have a Physician—"I am going fast," said he, "will Elfrida, think you, Frederic, be prevailed upon to see me when she is assured I am dying?"

"She is all goodness, Sir," said Frederic, "but if you consider the matter, it is a request that will cause her much pain, without any real benefit to yourself."

Ellifon was angry---"You can feel tenderly for every one but me, Sir," said he, "nor

“nor is it, I find, a moment’s concern to you, how torturing my last—”

“I wish, Sir,” said Frederic.

“Well, well,” cried Ellifon, interrupting him, “had I known you at an earlier age I should perhaps have had a son—but you were prejudiced against me—taught to look upon me as a bugbear, a monster in creation, before you ever beheld me, and I cannot expect to erase those impressions—Desire Mr. Overbury to indulge me with one half-hour’s private conversation.”

Mr. Overbury immediately attended.

“You behold a man,” said Ellifon, “upon the verge of the grave, yet unable to wean himself from his earthly attachments—Elfrida, I suppose, is uninterested in my condition, and only desires to hear of my exit—nevertheless, Mr. Overbury, I am not culpable—I married your daughter with your own consent—well, I grant you, rather unfortunately, into the dissipations of the age—but, if we are to be extreme in marking what is done amiss—who, except your favorite Wilmot, could stand before you?—Tell me, then, Sir, ought I to have been thus destroyed by her second marriage?—Elfrida was a woman, I ever conceived, that, once wedded, would have been wedded for life—but even your pure and spotless Elfrida could separate her hand from her affections,

and, while I was master of her person, suffer Wilmot to be the lord of her heart—Am I not then an injured man? greatly injured, deceived, abused—my faults proclaimed upon the house-top—my merits unacknowledged—What am I to think of all this? Does not Mrs. Ellison owe me some recompence?”

“This is not a time, I should apprehend, Sir,” said Mr. Overbury, “for mortifying retrospects—but, if it must be so, whatever injustice has been done you, I am the unfortunate criminal—the first, and melancholy cause of all my child has smarted under—she would not have married you, Sir, if I had not commanded her—you knew her reluctance better than I could do, yet you would solicit, and I would bestow her upon you—You talk of recompence—that idea misled me into espousing Wilmot’s pretensions—Elfrida besought us to spare her—an attempt to repair the errors of my conduct, induced me, a second time, to exert my authority—it therefore appears to me, that you and I, Sir, not my all open-minded and upright Elfrida, have woven the net in which our peace and honor have been entangled.”

“And is this, Mr. Overbury,” said Ellison, “this the comfort you offer a dying man, that man your son, the husband of
your

your Elfrida—her *only* husband—for her second marriage is spurious and invalid, to all intents and purposes—she is my wife, and I would know whether she means to pay me the last duties as such—or if I am to imagine her capable of revelling upon my grave.”

“Gentleness and benevolence,” said Mr. Overbury; “were ever the marking features of my Elfrida’s character—I will not remind you how patiently she bore the turns of fortune, of which you were an eye-witness—or, how unrepiningly she submitted to earn the bread she eat—upon what foundation, then, Sir, are you thus your own tormentor?—Elfrida will behave with propriety, let her situation be what it may.”

“The question I would ask, Mr. Overbury,” said Ellison, “is a plain one, is a natural one, an honest one—Do you suppose, if I were in eternity, and Wilmot should be living, that your daughter would again receive him for her husband?”

Mr. Overbury was unwilling to reply.

“And this question, Sir, which it is obvious you are disinclined to answer, I wish to ask Elfrida herself—for, would she but promise to devote herself to my memory, and henceforth bear my name, I should die quite happy.”

Mr. Overbury paused.

“Nay,

“Nay, Sir,” said Ellifon, “I did not tell you Wilmot was actually alive, if it is upon his account you make this hesitation—I only mentioned that should it appear so.”

“If you apprehend yourself in danger,” said Mr. Overbury, “are these the cares that ought to occupy your mind?—My daughter’s situation is delicate—she has three children, Mr. Ellifon, in what light would you have her place them to the world’s eye?”

“As they are, Sir,” returned he eagerly, “the children of error, the children of illegality.”

Mr. Overbury was greatly disturbed.

“Is it not a fact, Sir?” said Ellifon. “There can be no children of legitimacy, where the established laws of the land are violated—my son and daughter, the Frederic and Ella you have protected, what disqualification hangs about them for being my heirs, but that the vows I made their mother were not registered in the church—and the woman, however undefiled her heart, that goes to the altar with a second, while her first husband is alive, is deceived, I grant you, but she is not married—and the offspring of such an union must bear the reproach for ever.”

“Your condition protects you, Sir,” said Mr. Overbury, “from my resentment—
whilst

whilst your present behavior hardens my heart towards you—I would not, for the universe, strike at the repentant individual—but are you, Mr. Ellison, such—by what kind of spirit are you prompted to attempt this equally wild and unjust levelling, and place my all-virtuous Elfrida in the class of seduction?”

“What a double speaker you are, Mr. Overbury,” said Ellison, “and I have lived to discover it—your best of hearts, Sir, it seems, can spin out proud and partial distinctions, where there is no difference—my children, you have an hundred times told me, are innocent, but, when brought into comparison with your relations, become instantly guilty.”

“But, Sir,” said Mr. Overbury, “did I ever tell you their mother was blameless? The unborn, of whatever parents, must be innocent—but shall the woman, who, as far as human wisdom and human principle extends, has, with undeviating rectitude, been all that Heaven pronounces good—shall she not be distinguished from those who fall a sacrifice to the cruellest arts, I grant you, and to gratify an ungenerous wretch that calls himself a lover—devote themselves to infamy? then is darkness light, and light darkness. But I came not, Mr. Ellison, to dispute points with you, or to enter into disagreeable

agreeable retrospects—I came to serve you if I have the power, and to sooth you if you would permit me—but, upon the word of an honest man, this is not the temper you ought to encourage, or in which, for example's sake—your own peace-sake, you ought to die in.”

“To shorten our conference, then,” said Ellifon, “will you report to Elfrida, what distracts my feelings—will you solicit her to promise me, that as I have for these two years past, lived to her tranquillity, she will not refuse to give me rest in my grave, and never bestow herself upon another.”

“The promise I made a dying man,” said Mr. Overbury, “I should think myself bound to hold sacred—I cannot, therefore, temporize, though it concerns me to discompose you—it is most probable Wilmot is no more—Elfrida would not have continued in the same neighborhood with him, as she has quietly done with you—but—”

“It is her hatred,” said Ellifon, not her love, which produces that effect—Cursed, cursed destiny—had I been a man of spirit, Mr. Overbury, but it is now too late—leave me to die in the solitude I have merited.”

“Your son, Sir,” said Mr. Overbury, “your daughter, attends you.”

“It

"It is very well," said Ellifon.

"Me you may command---my wife, Mr. Ellifon, if you wish to see her---but ask not to renew the sorrows of the already almost broken-hearted Elfrida."

"Mr. Overbury, Mr. Overbury," said Ellifon, "if she suffers me to expire without beholding her, she will rob me of salvation hereafter, as she has done of peace here---you will have the goodness to tell her as much---and now, Sir, I would be alone till I receive her answer."

Mr. Overbury repeated what had passed between him and Ellifon to Captain Venables---"You amaze me," said that Gentleman, "for he gave me every reason to think, that to his certain knowledge Wilmot's cares had attained a final termination."

Mr. Overbury sighed.---"My fears," said he, "I confess to you, have always been stronger than my hopes, and yet this wretched and infatuated man's report must not be relied upon."

Elfrida wept bitterly---"Inhuman Ellifon," said she, "nor time, nor death, can tame your prejudices---I cannot, Sir, indeed, I cannot bear to see him."

"See him!" said Hannah, "well, well, I won't offend this company---but I know my own know---and must affirm that there
is

is but one fight of him that ought to be desired—by—my mistress or her relations.”

Mr. Overbury then mentioned his last words to him.

Elfrida was astonished—“His salvation,” said she, “endangered by my not complying with his request!—there is, my dear Sir, no standing against that—my feelings must have rest if I survive him—I will attend you to him.”

“My heavenly minded child,” said Mr. Overbury, “how perfectly do you fulfil every wish of your father’s heart, where your conduct is the object—I will immediately inform him, for, in his weak condition, after such exertions, it is very uncertain how soon he may depart.”

Mr. Overbury returned to the Grange and found this unhappy self-destroyer just recovered from a fit, and was fearful of a relapse, he would, therefore, have retired without speaking, but Ellifon held out his hands to stop him, and, as soon as he could speak, said, “Are you, Sir, the messenger of good or evil tidings?”

“Elfrida,” said Mr. Overbury, “will come to the Grange,”

“Best of women,” said Ellifon, his voice much thickened by his late attack—“then in death at least, she will be mine—I will endeavor

endeavor to repose myself for an hour or two, and will then ask her company—I feel I could not speak to her now all I would say to her—best of women, (repeated he) I knew she would oblige me—but do not leave the house, Mr. Overbury, lest a sudden change (you understand me, Sir, and I have somewhat of importance to communicate) should not allow us to meet again.”

Mr. Overbury retired with Frederic, into the next apartment—“ I think,” said he, “ we will send for Elfrida and your sister—for Ellison seems to have but a very short time longer to live.”

Frederic dispatched a servant to beg their company instantly, to wait Mr. Ellison’s awaking—for that Mr. Overbury was of opinion his awaking would be critical.

The Ladies arrived presently, and they all sat as silent as death.

At length they received, as Mr. Overbury had expected, a hasty summons.

“ Kneel down,” said he, “ and pray for me—I am departing—forgive me—I have wasted my precious hours in—but it is over—Heaven—Elfrida—Heaven pardon—”

And thus expired this very extraordinary man, for neither powers nor time was left him to accomplish his own intentions.

Elfrida

Elfrida was greatly affected, for it was the first death-bed scene she had ever been a spectator of—she quitted the room immediately.

Mr. Overbury considered it as the peculiar favor of Providence, that Ellifon was not permitted to exercise his meditated tyranny over the gentle heart of Elfrida, for it was evident he meant if possible, to extort an engagement from her, never more to reunite herself to Wilmot.

The Ladies went back as they came, in Captain Venables' chaise, and Mrs. Overbury, from their report, gave the unhappy man a tear.

Hannah no sooner heard Mr. Ellifon was dead, than she shut herself up in her chamber, intreating that no one would ask her the reason why. "I cannot," said she, "let what will come of it, I cannot learn the sentimentals, and weep at a deliverance—he is gone but just in good time to save us all from being killed by his ugly humors—I wonder he did not take it into his head to send for me this morning—not that I am unhuman neither," said Hannah, "but should have wept for him as well as another, while he was in agonies—but when people are gone they are gone—and other people must feel their good-fortune or have no feeling at all, that is my maxim. We shall now be released

released from our close confinement, and return to our little amusing walks in the paddock—Mercy on us what a nutshell have we contracted ourselves into, to avoid this strange man's brow-beatings, who, because he could not be happy himself, took unending delight in destroying the happiness of others—not but it was very good of him (she must needs acknowledge) to come and die amongst them, to prevent all doubts and demurs hereafter." But, recollecting herself, she wound up her otherwise not unpleasant soliloquy with, "Ah me, though, if poor Mr. Wilmot should be dead, what a heart-breaking thing it would be, now all evil impediments are removed."

Hannah vowed, if she never saw another fight upon earth, she would see Mr. Ellison's funeral, so to church she went, but, when the corpse was brought in, her heart misgave her (as she called it) and she owned it was a very solemn thing, to see even an enemy put into the ground.

Frederic wrote to Mrs. James as soon as his father died, and was requested by her, under authority from Wilmot, not to let a syllable drop of his being in England to any one of his friends until he could meet them at Bath, and settle a proper plan; for such, he was well-assured, was the friendship the whole

whole circle bore him, that to tell the news to one, would have been to tell it to all, by the change it would produce in their countenance; upon which account it was, that when Ellifon proved unfaithful to him, on their return from America, that he did not venture to address Mr. Overbury, Hannah, or even Frederic, though, by sending to the India-house, he found he was returned, for he persuaded himself it would be sufficient agitation for his Elfrida's spirits to have *one* of her unfortunate husbands in her neighborhood.

Wilmot, to his great surprize, and the agreeable surprize of his friend, Mrs. James, (on having his mind relieved from anxiety for Elfrida's situation) he knew not how, or when, lost his illness—his distressed feelings being the source of all he suffered, and he consented to go to Bath with her at the end of six weeks—so fearful was he of taking one step that might either be disapproved by Elfrida, or bring the most distant reflection of ignorance upon her character—that in his attention to her he lost every concern for himself.

A JUBILEE..

A JUBILEE.

Hannah, according to her own idea, behaved like an angel, for she never mentioned Wilmot's name, except in the nursery, where, indeed, she made herself ample amends for her self-denial, by talking of nothing else.

"I would," she repeatedly said to the children, "give much more than I shall ever be worth to hear some good news of him—for poor dear Mr. Wilmot was something like a master, a husband, a friend, and a papa—and then he was so handsome, yet so humble—and so wise, yet so free from pride—and you, Master Overbury, if you mind your hits, will be the very *moral* of him, the second edition to the life; and Master Venables will, from head to foot, be his grand-papa, and Miss Elfrida, her mama, but, mind me, my blessed children, if ever we do live to hear of him again (that is if we hear he is well, and will come and see us) we will make such a grand, and such a rantipole holiday of it, that all the world shall see and know how we love him, and, then, away with all this gloom, and our faces screwed up in such sorrowful plight, to please those that can't be joyful because of your sentimental

timentals—and we will dance, and sing, and huzza, and never, no never be sad again.”

And this fine story was told regularly every day by Hannah in the nursery—information that the childrens’ little hearts beat high with expectations—nor were they ever weary of the delightful theme—but it was all amongst themselves, for even Miss Ella was not intrusted with the great secret of their jubilee intentions.

The appointed six weeks being elapsed, Mrs. James insisted upon their taking their Bath journey—“For my reputation’s sake, Wilmot,” said she, “we must enlarge our acquaintance—for I am credibly informed that you and I have already been given in marriage to each other by my busy household, and their opinions have, no doubt, been circulated far and wide—so that if our, however honest, connexion, be not soon explained, it will be productive of worse consequences.”

Wilmot smiled—“What a plea, my dear Madam, have you set up,” said he, “but no wonder, the world believes you irresistible, for you can do what you please with the hearts you condescend to regulate—mine you have long since taught to obey your friendly dictates—I, therefore, submit myself wholly

—wholly to your guidance, upon this and every other lawful occasion.”

They accordingly left London the next morning.

Mrs. James requested that Frederic, attended by Captain and Mrs. Venables, would give her the meeting at Bath, without uttering any other name to them but her’s.

Mrs. Venables was alarmed—“I fear our most beloved Mrs. James,” said she, “is ill, and must fly to her, but, Elfrida, shall I confess to you, how much I wish you would let me prevail upon you to accompany us—the excursion would be of great service to you.”

“Do, our dear child,” said Mr. and Mrs. Overbury, “you may be as private as you please, and it would give us unspeakable pleasure to see you once more a candidate for health and tranquillity.”

“Never, O never,” said Elfrida, “shall my eyes behold a change of scene, or can my heart beat to satisfaction, until I hear somewhat of my dear and worthy fugitive—think not I forget Wilmot because I forbear to name him—I despair and hope by turns—You, however, now know my fixed resolution, and must desist attempting to shake it, for you would pain me without gaining one friendly point.”

They left her without reply.

The

The second day after this Bath journey, Elfrida rang the bell for Hannah to bring the children.

She waited some time very patiently, but observing one or two of the servants pass the window, whispering and shaking their heads—she was alarmed, and threw the parlor-door open to enquire the cause.

“Why, Madam,” said one of the housemaids, “I know not how to tell you—but Mrs. Jenkins seems quite beside herself!”

“How?—where?” said Elfrida, “the children—?”

Mrs. Overbury took her hand—“Your feelings, my love,” said she, “are so tremblingly alive—But tell us, Susan, what has happened—the children are all safe?”

“O dear yes, Madam,” said Susan, “every one is both safe and well, as a body may say—but Mrs. Jenkins is gone into Arcadia-gardens, instead of the paddock, and has dressed herself up in one of her mistress’ best negligees, with a sweeping train, and a great hood-winking cap and pink ribbons—and she has put pink cockades in the young masters’ hats, and Miss Elfrida has a pink sash on, and they are all dancing and singing in Arcadia.”

“Support me, Madam,” said Elfrida, —“Wilmot lives—nothing but an account
of

of his health and safety could have produced the effect Susan describes—how shall—how shall I bear to hear it?”

Mrs. Overbury seated herself by her daughter, on a sofa—“Compose yourself,” said she, “my dear Elfrida, your father will have the goodness to inform us how all this has happened.”

Mr. Overbury took his hat, and went to Arcadia.

“But pray,” said Elfrida to Susan, “pray tell me all you know.”

“Why, Mrs. Jenkins,” said Susan, “was as usual in the nursery, and I had assisted her in dressing the children—when one of the footmen came and told her a countryman was in the court-yard that wanted to speak with her—and so desiring me to look to the children, down she went, when she gave a great shout, and I lifted Master Overbury up to the window—when lo, and behold, she was kissing the countryman,—then, slap dash up came she, and, snatching Miss Elfrida out of my arms, bidding the other children follow her, away she had them into the court-yard, and made them every one put their arms about the man’s neck, and kiss him as she had done before them—and here, said she, in the first place, here is a guinea for you, and you may take these dismal things home

with you to your little ones, for we will have no more of them, snatching the dark ribbon from around Miss Ellfrida's waste, and the black ribbons from the other children's hats, and besure you come again, said she, in the evening."

Mrs. Overbury and Elfrida looked at each other.

"And so then, going to the store-room, she fetched out a pint of sack, and carried it up, and the children followed her into the nursery, and bolted the door after her—but, in a few minutes out she rushed, and opened your wardrobe, Madam, (to Elfrida) and dragged out a fine negligee and petticoat, and kicked a ban-box of your best caps before her—and, when we civilly asked her what she meant, she bid us be gone with our impertinent questions—at last we threatened to tell you, and she laughed at us, and said, the time was come that she did not care a fig for any body, and bid the children clap their hands—and then down the back-stairs went she, all the world like a player-woman, in the greatest pomp and splendor, and the children along with her, in their pink ribbons—and, when we asked her where she was going, she said to Arcadia—for she would never enter the gloomy paddock again, not she—and so we got

Miss

Miss Ella to step to Arcadia, and see what was going forwards—when lo, and behold, instead of coming back, as we desired her, to tell you—she set up a dancing with them—and Hannah bids us all defiance.”

“ Give me a glass of water,” said Elfrida
“ it is too, too much for my poor spirits—
What will become of me?”

Mr. Overbury returned—but not the Mr. Overbury he left them—his face was lighted up with smiles of gladness, and he seemed to tread air.

“ It is all true, Elfrida,” said he, “ as Susan has told you—joy is always fanciful—and so new as it is in our house, no wonder it should be frantic—My wife, my child—you must see this party.”

“ But, O my father,” said Elfrida, “ are my conjectures also true——tell me cautiously, tenderly, as you always do—yet, if there is not good foundation, do not, I beseech you, give me hope—for a disappointment would, I feel it, be fatal to me.”

Mr. Overbury took his seat by her—
“ There is not only hope, my Elfrida, but a happy certainty for you—the man of our friendship—the man of our regret—lives and is well.”

Notwithstanding all this preparation, Elfrida fainted on her mother's bosom.

She soon recovered—"Is Jenkins returned?" said she, "but before we hear more of Jenkins, tell me, my dear Sir, what accounts she has received of Wilmot?"

"A letter from Frederic, who is with our Wilmot at Bath, (Elfrida wept) was delivered by the countryman to Hannah—a few lines, just to confirm the tale, he well knew the good man would tell her—for it seems he met Frederic, Captain Venables, and our dear friend, in the street, or we should not have known our happiness so soon—but, instead of planning further schemes, since they could keep the secret no longer—they bid him come to Arcadia (as they had no doubt he would have done without their permission) and see Hannah alone, and intreat her to take care how she broke the news upon us—the rest you know, except that his wishes to see us are equal to the love he bears us, but that he even will not come with Captain Venables to the Grange, till you, my Elfrida, give him leave."

"Send for Hannah, my dear," said Mrs. Overbury, "it will be a relief to us."

"I am not sure," said Mr. Overbury, "she is to be had for asking for—she had

had got the children and Ella into the temple, and kept me at bay a considerable time—the long and the short of the matter is, said she, I have got my own master again, and do not think fit to obey any other—and the children have got a new papa—at which words the little ones set up an huzza—but, running to the window, both Venables and Overbury told me, they would not love me the less for having got back their dear papa Wilmot.”

“ I then asked Hannah,” said Mr. Overbury, “ what could put it in her head to behave so wildly ; she answered, nature—and she had brought the children out, that they might all, for once, *act* nature without being plagued with your flim-flam *delikiffes*, which had been the torment of her life—but it was all at an end now—for Mr. Wilmot, God bless him, would let every body follow their own head—and not seek to make a velvet purse of a sow’s ear, as her mistress had so often done—wanting to teach her sentimentals and *dickorums*—and not to be joyful when she was glad, and sorrowful when she was afflicted—or angry when she was *mif*-used—or to hate her enemies, all which was against nature, law and conscience.”

Mr.

Mr. Overbury was, at last, obliged to be his own messenger—for she would not attend to the servant, or come when he bid her, until he told her Elfrida desired to see her.

“Well,” replied she, “Elfrida let it be, for the present—though, in my mind, Mrs. Whitmot sounds a thousand times more *pleasing*.”

“O, Grandpapa,” said Overbury, “what a day is this!—did you think you should ever live to see this good day?”

Hannah, with all the dignity of a tragedy-queen, walked, for some time, over the lawn—but being ready to tumble at every second step, from the incumbrance of an hoop, and the impediments of her train—on hearing Elfrida was impatient for her coming—she very fairly gathered up her finery about her, and set off, the children, with numberless little antics, following her.

In a word, the altogether of her appearance was so fantastic, that it would not have been *acting* nature, as she called it, not to have laughed—and Elfrida and Mrs. Overbury, whose muscles were such strangers to risibility, not only relaxed, but a most hearty fit of laughter did they enjoy at her expence—whilst the children, thinking her the very model of all that was

was elegant and amiable—upon her letting down her train, like so many Cupids stood around her, shaking out her flowing drapery and intoxicated with joy.

The countryman kept his appointment with Hannah, and said he had undertaken to bring Mr. Frederic an answer before day, the next morning.

Mr. Overbury wrote, in the name of the whole family, describing Hannah's behavior upon the occasion.

“These,” said he, “my Wilmot, were the overflowings of an affectionate and an uncultivated heart; you will know, by sympathy, what ours felt, to have you restored to us—your Elfrida's sensibility was alarmingly interested.”

Hannah hired a boy to watch upon a terrace, which commanded a distant view of the winding-road, to give her notice the moment he saw a carriage, the next day and the day following—when, about four o'clock in the afternoon, she received the so anxiously desired intelligence. She slipped out, with the children, at a private door—and stationed herself, kneeling behind them, upon an eminence of the park, near the road-side—but was under terrible apprehensions lest her mistress should discover, and disapprove of the rank and file in which they were drawn

drawn up to salute the coach as it passed, and order them away before it arrived.

They were, however, seen by the company, at some distance—the little Elfri-da's pink sash, like a jubilee streamer, playing in air—and Captain Venables bid the Coachman quicken his pace—Hannah, drowned in tears (which to her was most unaccountable, when her heart was ready to burst with joy) bid them clap their little hands and shout papa Wilmot, and they added of themselves, “take us with you, papa, up to the Grange.”

Wilmot was oppressed with delight—and had them all helped over the wall, into the coach.

“Aye, aye, Lord love them,” said Hannah, “let them taste of happiness for once, I will answer what I have done, I'll warrant you.”

Wilmot, having tenderly embraced the children, made the coach stop till he had spoken kindly to Hannah, his good wishes and his gratitude.

“I think,” said she, “I never felt anything like this day's pleasure in all my life—nor has the best fine lady among them all, half the satisfaction in their kickshaw notions, as I have in an honest and plain

plain heart, which I am not ashamed to shew to all the world.

She wiped away her tears as soon as the coach drove out of sight—"Well, well," said she, "how finely times are altered with me—I used to be afraid of doing wrong and offending, and I cannot tell what—whereas now I fear nobody—and for why? because I have children that are as harmless as myself to deal with—and to help them to be happy has nothing to do with your *dickorums*—and much good may do those that are too wise, and too high-bred to follow my example—and will not speak what they think, or do what they wish, with their *logical* stuff, that answers no earthly end, but to torment each other, and hold the lovingest friends at a distance—for if this had not been the case, the whole family would have kept watch and ward, as we have done, and stopped Mr. Wilmot on the King's high-road, to bid him welcome."

Mrs. Overbury threw up the window, surprized to see Hannah walking alone—"Where are the children," said she, "Jenkins?"

"Where they ought to be, Madam," said Hannah, "in the coach with their papa Wilmot, who is carrying them up to the Grange."

"Eless

"Bless me," said Elfrida.

"What have I done wrong," said Hannah, "to put the children into the hands of their own father?"

Elfrida smiled—"It would be hard, Hannah," said she, "to condemn such well-meant kindness—but it would, surely, have been better, for you to have gone up with them to the house, than to have hoisted them over the park-wall."

"It might have been more *politer*," said Hannah, "but it would not have been half so affectionate—for affection knows nothing of whims and forms, but, like hunger, would break through stone walls."

"Will you follow, however, my good woman," said Elfrida, "and tell all our friends how impatient we are to see them, but particularly Mr. Wilmot."

Hannah flew—and, having a view of the church, as she walked through the park—"Aye, aye," said she, "there you lie—the disturber, when alive, of all that knew you—but, I own, it was very good-natured of you to come home to die, that we may have no ifs or ands stand in the way of our future happiness—nor, for your sake will I ever believe in ghosts again."

Hannah

Hannah was no sooner seen by the children, than, with one voice, they told her, she might go home without them.

"It is to your papa Wilmot," said she, "I am come—to fetch him to your mama."

Wilmot received her message—"And can my Elfrida's spirits," said he, "bear an interview?—then will I take an abrupt leave of my friends, and instantly attend her."

They saw him coming from Arcadia-house—and Mrs. Overbury, who was at her toilet, put on three cloaks, without being sensible of what she was doing, to go down to receive him—she found him, however, seated by Elfrida—calmly holding one of her hands—whilst Elfrida, by the assistance of her smelling-bottle, preserved herself from fainting.

"My prayers are heard," said Mrs. Overbury—"my wishes accomplished—to see your face again, my Wilmot, is excess of happiness—the full heart—you must think what it would say to you—a mother's cares—a mother's tenderness—a mother's joy—"

Elfrida begged they might endeavor to collect themselves.

"Our

“ Our destiny, Wilmot,” said she, “ has been singular—and the world’s eye will be upon us—Mr. Ellison’s death must have its proper effect upon our minds—I detest forms—but decency must not be violated—our sacred union has been dissolved by an event, we had not the prescience to guard against—and we must meet a second time at the altar—it shall be as private as possible—let Venables and Overbury live with you at the Grange, and send Elfrida to me—until we can, with propriety, become one family.”

“ I was, indeed, once of opinion, that to atone the error we had fallen into, we should live separated—but it was, I am convinced, false refinement—the years we passed together were blissful ones—we have complied with every decorum our misfortunes demanded—and we are now at liberty to re-choose each other, and shall I deny myself the felicity of choosing my Wilmot?”

“ Life of my life,” said Mr. Wilmot, “ I have no will but your’s—and to your determinations I wholly submit myself.”

At the end of four months, which Elfrida would have made six, but was persuaded, by her mother, to keep Wilmot
no

no longer from his home—Hannah met them at church, and heard them once more pronounced man and wife.

She returned in raptures, but said, that to the hour of her death, she should think it nothing but enchantment and witchcraft that had kept them so long apart, when Heaven and Mr. Ellison gave them leave to meet for ever.

Ella lived at Arcadia, and Frederic at the Grange—to which house an additional wing was built to enable Mrs. James to be a constant resident there—and as for Wilmot's children, they seemed scarcely to know their natural from their acquired friends.

Mrs. Venables had a son, to whom she gave the name of Wilmot—and Mrs. James insisted upon it, that, contrary to all her notions and principles, she was actually fallen in love a second time, for, that Wilmot's merits were not to be resisted.

The delighted Mr. and Mrs. Overbury felt their tide of happiness like a dream, from which they were afraid to awake.

Mrs. Jenkins had leave to do and say whatever she pleased to all parties, except spoiling the children—an exception she yielded

yielded to with a very ill grace—and Frederic bid a final adieu to a sea-life, it being impossible for him, he said, ever again to leave friends he held so dear, and to whom he had been so miraculously restored.

F I N I S.



